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THE NEWSPAPER FOR MAIDSTONE, MALLING, LARKFIELD AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES

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DRUGS HAUL WAS WORTH £33 MILLION



JAILED: Abdul Shammin

THE biggest seizure of heroin ever made by UK police took place at a Maidstone service station, a court has heard.

Officers swooped on four drug dealers as they transferred £33 million of the class A drug from one car to another at the junction eight services in April 2008.

Three London men were jailed for their roles in the botched deal at Kingston Crown Court on Monday. They received sentences between 15-and-a-half and 23 years in prison.

Dutch national Patrick Kuster, who smuggled the drugs into the UK through the Eurotunnel, was sentenced to 26 years at an earlier hearing.

■ BY ANNA WHITE

Met Police chiefs said they were delighted to have taken 330kg of heroin off the streets. Detective Inspector Marion Ryan said: "This result is testimony to how the Met has prevented the serious consequences this conspiracy could have had on people's lives. "This gang had a flagrant disregard for law, blatantly transporting these dangerous drugs in the back of their cars.

"The Met will not tolerate the use and supply of class A drugs and we continue to tackle any organised criminal networks involved in this highly illegal activity."

• For more turn to page three.



STRICTLY STAR SETS CHALLENGE

Strictly Come Dancing judge Alesha Dixon is challenging residents to start the New Year fit and healthy.

The pop star has teamed up with LA Fitness to promote its six-month free membership offer at its clubs across Kent.

The former Strictly champion said: "As a nation we're not looking after our health as we should be, and with a little help from me LA Fitness is aiming to get people back in the gym."

The singer's involvement is the start of a new image overhaul for the fitness company before it refurbishes all clubs by 2012.

LA Fitness has a gym in Maidstone town centre. For more information visit www.lafitness.co.uk.



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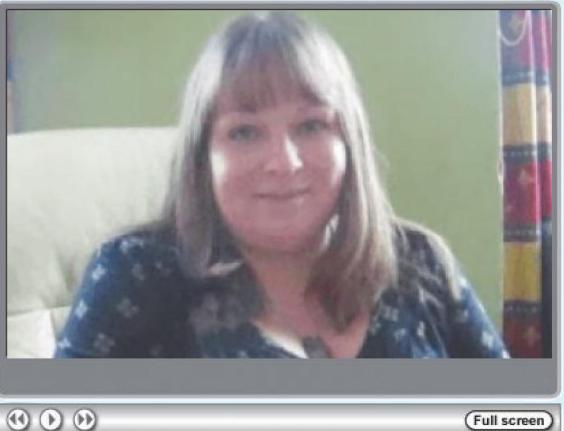
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Online anger at lack of grit on pavements

■ BY ANNA WHITE

RESIDENTS have slammed council bosses for putting their safety at risk by failing to grit the town's pavements.

More than 1,350 members have joined an online campaign group which urges Kent County Council to make the roads and pavements safe for both pedestrians and motorists during the heavy snowfall.

The Facebook group was launched after many pathways in Maidstone were left untreated throughout the cold snap, which as a result turned the pavements into sheets of ice.

The group attracted more than 1,000 members within the first two days of its launch and is now full of comments from angry residents about the state of Maidstone's pathways.

Supplies

One member wrote: "I saw lots of people walking in the road alongside busy traffic during the last lot of snow. They had decided it was safer to risk being stuck by a car than walk on the treacherous pavements."

Another wrote: "With so many elderly, and not so elderly, that are a bit unsteady on their feet, they need the security of a gritted pavement to go out, families with disabled children still have to go out and carry all the equipment to cars and carry extra heavy children who can't walk, so a bit of extra grit would go a long way."

Despite road salt supplies running low nationwide, KCC's cabinet member for environment, Nick Chard, said there is enough grit to last another fortnight, but KCC's main priority is the major roads.

Councillor Chard said: "We are mindful of how difficult it has been in the towns. We will continue to salt pavements where we are able to, but



SLIPPERY SLOPE: More than 1,000 people joined Facebook campaign over gritting issue

KCC's priority has to be to keep the major routes safe and reduce road fatalities."

Even though KCC has a supply of grit left, Cllr Chard expressed concern that any additional salt it has ordered will be redirected by central government to other parts of the UK with shorter supplies.

Maidstone's Green party parliamentary candidate, Stuart Jeffery, who created the Facebook group, said: "Kent County Council is failing to protect vulnerable people by refusing to grit pavements as well as roads.

"Thousands of people were stranded at home, unable to get to the shops before Christmas, others suffered avoidable injuries when they tried to get out. This is unacceptable.

"Staff who are out gritting roads are working hard and we thank them, but KCC needs to ensure more money, staff and grit are available to clear pavements as well."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Motorists hit by fines after abandoning cars

MOTORISTS who abandoned their cars after becoming stuck in a snow storm have been left hundreds of pounds out of pocket after police chiefs ordered tow trucks to impound their vehicles.

Dozens of drivers decided to leave their cars behind last week when a prolonged downpour brought Blue Bell Hill to a complete standstill.

Some said they opted to walk after Wednesday's late-afternoon blizzard rendered driving conditions treacherous. Others said they ran out of petrol during the five-hour delay.

Regardless of their reasons, Kent Police hired a recovery company to remove 18 cars from the road.

The vehicles were all towed to a holding pound on the Isle of Sheppey.

The release fee is set at £150 with an additional charge of £20 slapped on top for every extra day the car is held.

More than 1,200 furious motorists – many of whom were caught up in the rush-hour hold-up between Medway and Maidstone – have joined an online campaign to have the tow charges refunded.

Necessary

Driver Marion Simmonds, from Ditton, said: "I can't believe the police ordered a company to do this."

"The roads were so icy that I had no choice but to abandon the car."

"I find it extortionate that they are charging me £150 just to get it back."

Jayne Odwyer added: "It's disgusting. If the roads were gritted in the first place, cars might not have to have been abandoned."

"Typical, make money out of people's misery."

A Kent police spokesman said: "People take the risk of having their vehicles towed when they make the decision to abandon them."

"In this circumstance it was absolutely necessary to move the cars because the road needed to be cleared."

"We do understand that sometimes people have no choice but to abandon their cars, but we want to keep the road network open."

"We use a number of towing companies and do not make any money from them. We can't comment on charges and costs give to car users."

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For information and advice on travelling in Kent and for all our traffic regulation orders, please see the Kent on Saturday or the Kent on Sunday or visit our website at www.kent.gov.uk/highways

'My life is over' said dealer during arrest

Service station raid netted record haul

■ BY ANNA WHITE

THREE men have been jailed for their part in a £33 million drug deal which was foiled by police at a Maidstone service station.

Harminder Chana, 32, Abdul Shammin, 30, and Atif Khan, 34, were arrested at the M20 junction eight services with 330kg of heroin – enough to supply more than 8,000 addicts for a year.

The seizure is the biggest known to any UK police force.

The London trio were captured by police in April 2008.

Officers found the heroin wrapped in half-kilo and one-kilo blocks in the cardboard boxes.

It is believed the load was destined to be split between a number of drug dealers.

The men were sentenced for their roles in the botched deal at Kingston Crown Court on Monday.

The court heard how Kuster had smuggled the drugs from Holland through the Eurotunnel, in the boot of his mother's BMW.

The Dutch national then drove to the service station to make a drop-off, on behalf of various syndicates.

Police were led to the motorway site by infor-



BEHIND BARS: (Left to right) Kuster, Khan and Chana were caught transferring the heroin with a street value of £33m

mation on Chana, who was seen driving a Seat Leon into the services to meet Kuster and transfer boxes to his car.

They were both arrested on the spot.

At the time of arrest, Chana claimed he had only taken part because he was out of work and needed the money.

Safe house

The gang member said: "Look officer I'm going to be honest with you, I've never done anything like this before, but I'm trying to get back into work and I was getting paid to do it.

On caution, Kuster said: "My life is over".

During a search of the two cars, officers discovered three boxes transferred to the Seat

Leon, contained 50 kilos of heroin, worth an estimated street value of £5 million.

The remaining ten boxes in Kuster's BMW contained more than 300 kilos of the drug, worth around £25m.

Officers arrested Khan later that day, outside his home in Brixham Gardens, Ilford, east London, and found keys to a 'safe house' in Beckton.

A search of the house uncovered 20 kilos of Mannitol, commonly used to bulk-up cocaine, and various equipment used to handle drugs.

The evidence linked Khan's business partner, Shammin – also known as Abdul Rob – to the crime and he was later accused of arranging and financing three boxes of the heroin.

Forum gives farmers say on the future

FARMERS will have the opportunity to share their views on the future of the countryside to a powerful line-up of decision makers.

Confirmed to attend the Rural Business Forum is shadow minister for agriculture, fisheries and wildlife, Richard Benyon MP, Kent County Council leader Paul Carter and Hadlow College's director of finance and resources Mark Lumsden-Taylor.

The event, organised by the Conservative parliamentary candidate for Maidstone and Weald, Helen Grant, is being held at 11.30am on January 26, at the Weald of Kent Golf Hotel, Headcorn.

Mrs Grant said: "The agricultural economy and our farming communities are a vital and natural part of this county and for some time I have wanted to bring something tangible and political to engage the rural business sector.

"I am therefore delighted we have such excellent speakers to head up this event. From personal experience I am sure our farmers and agricultural business people will not hold back in the ensuing question and answer session."

To book tickets, email helen.grant@helengrant.org.

Firefighters praised for saving stranded passengers on train

SEVENTEEN rail passengers had to be rescued by firefighters after their train lost power during last week's heavy snowfall.

Retained firefighters were called to the stranded train near to Paddock Wood station, in Beltring Road, just after 8.30pm on Wednesday.

Among the trapped passengers was a 35-year-old diabetic man who was suffering from a hypoglycaemic attack.

The crews, from Marden and Paddock Wood, liaised with Network Rail operators in an attempt to move the train to a safer position and, after ensuring that power to the tracks had been isolated, began safely evacuating the train.

The diabetic man was carried to safety by the firefighters and treated for his attack. All passengers and staff were rescued by 10pm.

The firefighters, who also respond to medical emergencies under the corresponding scheme with South East Coast Ambulance Trust, have been praised for their work at the incident.

Director of operations Steve Demetriou said: "Firefighters and control room staff don't do their job for praise or recognition, but when they carry out actions that are considered above and beyond it is important to congratulate them on a job well done.

"I am very proud of the fire crews work, their excellent response and quick decision making ensured a swift and safe rescue of the trapped passengers and staff. Without their actions the outcome could have been far more serious," he added.

"While attending fires and road traffic collisions is part of our statutory duties, we do so much more to provide a safety net when things go wrong, including rescues from the snow, rescues from height, flooding and a wide range of other specialist rescue responses."

"However, we don't often rescue passengers, especially ones with a serious medical condition, who are trapped on a train in the middle of a severe snow storm, as was the case here."

Unruly shoppers leave owner with damage to stock

■ BY ANNA WHITE

A SKI shop owner was forced to close when his customers became frantic and trashed the store.

Tim Baldock, owner of Moor and Mountain, in West Malling, had been doing his best to help his customers cope in the recent severe weather, but shut his doors when things got out of hand.

On Saturday, the store became extremely busy and stock was being damaged by shoppers panicking to buy weather-proof items.

Mr Baldock, whose family has owned the shop for many generations, said: "It just got to a point when I had to shout 'everybody out' and I am thankful to those who listened and did leave.

"We have been opening at 4.30am recently to serve lorry drivers travelling through and have been very busy, but I have never seen anything like what I saw on Saturday, it was just chaos.

"There were shoes everywhere that people had just dropped on the floor and our stock was getting damaged.

"I think the less said about it the better as I'm sure some of the people who behaved badly will be very embarrassed, but I would like to thank those who helped control the situation."

Moor and Mountain's sister shop – Baldocks – is also in West Malling's village centre and has been established there since 1978.

Residents across the country are also panic buying food shopping to avoid being stuck in the heavy snowfall, which has forced many supermarket chains to limit the amount of milk and bread each customer buys.

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Teens are charged with numerous burglaries

TWO teenagers are due to appear in court charged with a number of burglaries.

Ashley Judge, of Hendley Drive, Cranbrook, and a Tonbridge 15-year-old, who cannot be named for legal reasons, were arrested in connection with burglaries in Maidstone, Marden and west Kent.

Nineteen-year-old Judge has also asked for seven other burglaries to be taken into consideration. They have been bailed to appear at Maidstone Magistrates on January 25.

Charity could give you a holiday or cash prize.

RESIDENTS could be in with a chance of winning a free holiday or £1,000 cash if they enter a charity prize draw.

To enter the draw, hopefuls need to visit Age Concern in Mill Street, before March 31, where staff will be on hand to offer useful information on the charity's Travel Insurance and other products.

The winning ticket will be picked on April 15 and the lucky entrant will win an Age Concern prize.

Reverend Genders voted school admissions leader

THE COUNTY'S school admissions forum has appointed the director of education for the Diocese of Canterbury as its new chairman.

Following a vote, Reverend Nigel Genders was chosen as the new leader of the Kent Schools Admissions Forum. The forum is an independent statutory body, which advises Kent County Council on the fairness, legality and effectiveness of admissions arrangements for about 600 schools.

Maidstone Housing Trust brings home top award

SOCIAL housing tenants can be sure they are receiving the best customer service now Maidstone's team was awarded top marks.

Maidstone Housing Trust has been awarded the prestigious Customer Service Excellence Award after workers impressed assessors with their response and commitment to customer needs.

Chief executive Peter Stringer said: "We aim to put the customer first, and the award is recognition of this commitment."

Up in arms over coats

Outrage after clothing is confiscated by head in icy conditions

■ BY ANNA WHITE

PUPILS had their coats confiscated despite the sub-zero temperatures after their headteacher imposed a non-uniform clampdown.

The move saw dozens of students at Aylesford Sports College stripped of their coats, hats and scarves.

The shocked youngsters were told by teachers their jackets would be confiscated until the end of the day, despite the below freezing temperatures, and would be sent home if they refused – which the school said it would class as truancy.

Stunned

Pupils and parents said they were stunned by the timing of the uniform clampdown.

Adele Ankers, whose 16-year-old daughter Charlotte was one of the pupils to be sent home, said: "I agree the kids should wear school uniform, and mine always have, but what I don't agree with is making them wear this coat in these weather conditions.

"I am asking the school to use common sense by letting the kids wear their own warmer coats while it is snowing and below freezing temperatures, and wear the school uniform coat in warmer weather.

"Charlotte is currently studying for her GCSEs and needs to be in school, but I don't see why I should have to pay out for a new coat when she already has a plain, black, warm, suitable coat. It's pathetic.

"The school should be worrying about our children's education not a coat."



ANGER: Elizabeth Lynch, Harrison Berry-Lynch, Charlotte Ankers and Adele Ankers hold the school uniform coats

Harrison Berry-Lynch, 16, who suffers from asthma, also had his coat confiscated by a teacher.

The teenager's mother Elizabeth Lynch said: "These teachers have a duty of care to our children and they are not doing this by taking their coats in freezing cold weather – it's ridiculous."

"The cold weather is not good for Harrison's asthma, so who would be to blame if having his coat taken from him sparked an attack?"

Pupils have also left comments on the Aylesford School, Wrong Coat – Go Home group on social networking site Facebook, saying the uniform coat is not "warm enough" and claim the school has now moved on to confiscating hats and scarves.

One student wrote: "It's pathetic. They tried taking my coat off me but I said no because it's cold, there's snow on the floor and because they shouldn't be allowed to."

Head teacher Doug Lawson defended his decision, saying: "There was a small minority of students who did not wear the correct coat. We have not excluded or sent any child home."

"The uniform was decided upon after lengthy consultations with students and parents, the parents' views being of particular importance."

Mr Lawson also said a reminder letter was sent to parents to inform them their children would need to wear the new uniform coat, costing between £21 and £26, or a £12 fleece, both of which bear the school logo.

Success is in the bag for purse theft scheme



SCHEME: Pupils helped with purse theft campaign in run up to Christmas

A SCHEME to crackdown on purse thefts has proved a great success with crime figures plummeting during the festive season.

Between November 1 and December 31 purse thefts in the town centre dropped by more than three quarters compared to the number reported during the same period in 2008.

A total of 16 thefts were recorded during 2009 – 58 less than the 74 incidents in 2008.

Maidstone town centre manager

Bill Moss said: "We were determined to clamp down on purse theft after significant numbers of people fell prey to this in 2008.

"In response the police and town centre management came together to create a campaign, to engage with shoppers and show people how they could protect themselves and their belongings.

"The results have been overwhelming with a reduction of more than 78 per cent."

High-visibility signs, posters

and leaflets were used in Maidstone to raise awareness of the issue, hundreds of purse clips were given out and a DVD highlighting the benefits of the clips was played to elderly and vulnerable residents.

Town Centre Management and police also worked in collaboration with Maplesden Noakes School and the Cornwallis Academy, Linton, to get the message to family members and friends of the students.

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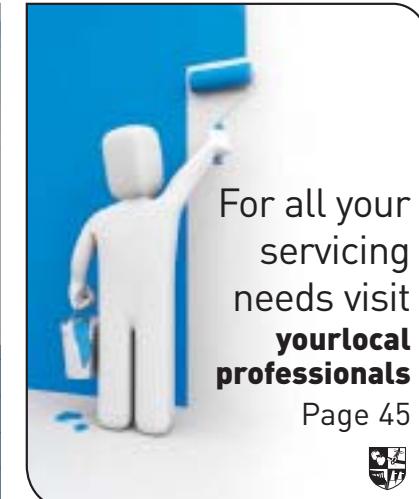
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CAMPAGNERS: Stuart Jeffery, Sarah Waters, Helen Grant, Peter Carroll and Rav Sereethun (Maternity)

Protesters ask supporters to head to No 10

CAMPAIGNERS fighting plans to downsize maternity services will present their petition to Number 10 next week.

The campaign, led by the town's four parliamentary candidates, aims to overturn the decision to move Maidstone Hospital's consultant led maternity ward to the new Pembury site when it opens in 2011.

Following the decision from NHS bosses to refuse to change their plans the rival hopefuls are now taking their fight to the Prime Minister's Office on Monday, January 18, to hand over their petition of more than 20,000 signatures.

Petitions

Even though only six people can go to the door of 10 Downing Street, the campaigners are urging their supporters to join them by standing at the end of the street to show unity and mass objection.

The Liberal Democrat candidate for Maidstone and Weald, Peter Carroll, has experience in presenting petitions to Gordon Brown's office due to his involvement in the highly successful Gurkha Justice campaign with actress Joanna Lumley.

Mr Carroll said: "When we went to Number 10 with the Gurkhas there were thousands of us and it really is vital to show that support."

"I would urge as many people as possible to join us but for them to let me know as I need to notify the police of how many are expected to come."

Mr Carroll's Conservative rival Helen

■ BY ANNA WHITE

Grant and Green opponent Stuart Jeffery have both confirmed they will be two of the six campaigners to present the petition.

Labour hopeful Rav Sereethun, Marden resident and fellow campaigner, Sarah Waters, and a representative of MASH (Maidstone Action for Services in Hospital) have been invited to fill the final three places.

The decision to change Maidstone's consultant led maternity unit to a midwifery birthing centre, suitable for low-risk labours, has caused outrage among the community and both borough and county councillors.

More than 4,000 members have joined the Keep Full Maternity at Maidstone group on social networking site Facebook, and many have expressed their anger at the thought of women travelling 30 minutes if their labour became complicated.

A mum-of-three wrote: "I was told that the natural delivery was all going smoothly however as I got right to the end of the labour complications arose and things started to go wrong."

"It became an emergency situation very quickly and no one could have foreseen that. Without the services at Maidstone the outcome could have been very different."

The campaign group will present their petitions to Number 10 Downing Street at 11am.

For more information or to confirm your attendance email Peter Carroll at pdcarroll@cix.co.uk.

yourmaidstone NEWS IN BRIEF

Youth starved of nature

EXPERTS warn young people living in urban towns are in danger of missing out on the benefits of nature.

The message comes from The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) after survey results showed only a third of under 35s feel connected to the natural world, compared with more than half of those aged over 35.

The RSPB's research suggests the problem, dubbed Nature Starvation, is greater in urban towns – such as Maidstone.

Kate Humble, RSPB president, said: "These results are worrying. If a child hasn't ever got their hands dirty sifting through soil for bugs, kicked up leaves or been wowed by a cute baby bird, how can we expect them to care about the natural world?"

The charity is urging residents to sign its Letter to the Future – which hopes to encourage government to invest in the environment. Visit www.rspb.org.uk/lettertothefuture.

Saks salon to shut down

A SALON has become the latest business to buckle under the pressure of the recession after announcing plans to close its doors.

Saks Hair and Beauty, which is located in David Lloyds Fitness, within the Lockmeadow Complex, has told customers it will cease trading on Saturday, January 9, after struggling to recover from a hard year.

In a letter to clients, the team said they had moved "heaven and earth to try to avoid this outcome" and are "very sad" to be closing.

The Saks Kings Hill branch remains open.

Green resolutions for 2010

HOUSEHOLDS are urged to start the New Year with an eco-friendly resolution and help turn left over waste into clean electricity.

A large majority of residents already recycle paper, glass and other items, but environment chiefs now want to see families recycle their used cooking oil.

Research shows that one litre of oil can be converted into a new green fuel and produce enough energy to make 240 cups of tea.

To make the process easier for Maidstone residents, Kent County Council has installed cooking oil collection tanks at the Household Waste Recycling centre in Tovil.

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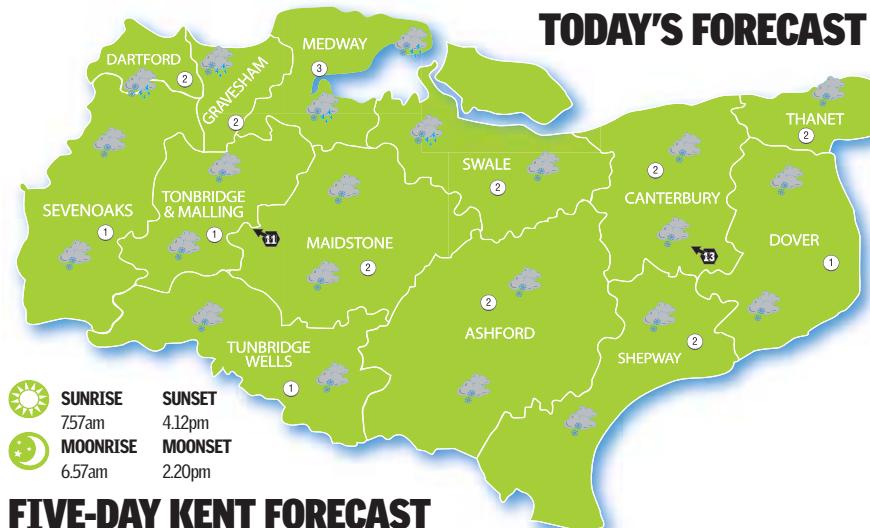
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Ashford	1°C	2°C	3°C	5°C	5°C	Gravesend	2°C	2°C	3°C	5°C	6°C
Canterbury	1°C	2°C	4°C	5°C	5°C	Maidstone	2°C	2°C	3°C	5°C	5°C
Chatham	3°C	3°C	4°C	6°C	5°C	Ramsgate	1°C	2°C	4°C	5°C	5°C
Dartford	2°C	2°C	3°C	5°C	6°C	Rochester	3°C	3°C	4°C	6°C	5°C
Dover	1°C	1°C	3°C	4°C	4°C	Sevenoaks	0°C	1°C	2°C	3°C	4°C
Faversham	3°C	3°C	4°C	6°C	5°C	Sittingbourne	3°C	3°C	4°C	6°C	5°C
Folkestone	1°C	1°C	3°C	4°C	4°C	Tonbridge	1°C	1°C	3°C	5°C	5°C
Gillingham	3°C	3°C	4°C	6°C	5°C	Tun Wells	1°C	1°C	3°C	5°C	5°C

TODAY'S FORECAST



WEEKEND HIGH TIDES

Chatham	Saturday	1:36pm	5.7m
	Sunday	2:08pm	5.8m
Dover	Saturday	11:46am	6.3m
	Sunday	12:19pm	6.3m
Dungeness	Saturday	11:41am	7.1m
	Sunday	12:15pm	7.2m
Ramsgate	Saturday	12:16pm	4.8m
	Sunday	12:49pm	4.8m
Sheerness	Saturday	1:26pm	5.5m
	Sunday	1:58pm	5.5m
Whitstable	Saturday	1:27pm	5.0m
	Sunday	1:58pm	5.1m



AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	0°C	Madrid	-1°C
Athens	15°C	New York	-4°C
Barcelona	7°C	Paris	1°C
Beijing	-6°C	Rome	8°C
Bombay	31°C	Sydney	26°C
Cape Town	24°C	Tenerife	21°C
Cardiff	1°C	Tokyo	5°C
Gibraltar	16°C	Vancouver	10°C
Hong Kong	14°C	Warsaw	-3°C
Las Palmas	21°C	Wellington	15°C



SPECIAL GUEST: Ann Widdecombe with chief executive Kate Bosley, right, and volunteers at the Heart of Kent Hospice

MP visits hospice for the final time

ANN Widdecombe paid what will be her last Christmas visit to a hospice as the town's voice in Parliament.

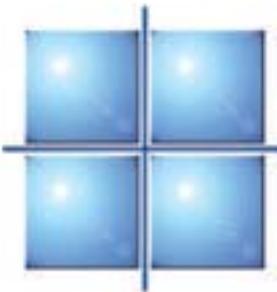
The Maidstone and Weald MP has visited the Heart of Kent Hospice, in Aylesford, every Christmas Eve for many years to meet the patients and their families.

Ms Widdecombe will retire from her position at this year's General Election, making her most recent festive meeting at the charity her last official visit.

The Conservative MP said: "I am delighted to have had such a long association with The Heart of Kent Hospice and will miss my Christmas visits.

"I am hoping to hear about any developments at the Hospice and hope it goes from strength to strength, as it has done over the years."

Chief executive at The Heart of Kent Hospice, Kate Bosley, said: "It was a pleasure to see Miss Widdecombe at the Hospice this Christmas, which has now become a tradition. "We have very much appreciated her support over the years."



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QUESTION & ANSWER

ANGUS FRASER



Q & A

The new chair of trustees at The Caldecott Foundation at Smeeth near Ashford, which cares for up to 50 children who have suffered cruelty and neglect, talks to **Ed Hill** about the future of the foundation

Q Why did you want to get involved with The Caldecott Foundation?

A My involvement began five years ago, after a casual conversation with a friend who has been a long-serving Caldecott trustee. Caldecott had just built a new school on their Smeeth site and were looking for school governors. I have always been interested in education, both personally and professionally – I was chairman for nearly seven years of the Alpha Plus education group in London – so I was delighted to help.

Q How has it changed in recent years?

A A great deal. In the mid-90s, an appeal was launched for major projects, including building a new school and improving the houses. This raised £8 million. The Duke of Edinburgh visited us three years ago to mark its successful conclusion. But it's not just about capital investment. We have also made great strides in developing our range of services and in enhancing the quality of integrated care we provide for some of Britain's most neglected and vulnerable children, so as to help them rebuild their lives.

Q You have extensive experience in business. How does this help in your work with the Caldecott Foundation?

A Most of our income is from local authority social services departments, who place children in our care. They expect us to manage our

affairs in a professional and businesslike way. We don't receive government funding or grants, so we need to work hard to provide the best care, therapy, education and fostering service we can within the resources available. We have to be competitive to earn the opportunity to do that. What's more, we need to set money aside to invest in facilities for the future, so we look after our money very carefully, and are very appreciative of the donations and legacies we receive from our supporters. These help pay for life-enriching extras for the children, such as holidays, outings and sports equipment.

Q Are the services the Foundation offers under more pressure at the moment? What are the main problems?

A With public finances under scrutiny, it is an economically difficult time for our local authority clients and we will need more than ever to demonstrate high quality and value for money. Running a care organisation like Caldecott is inevitably costly, not least because of our relatively high staff to child ratio.

Q The Foundation is nearly 100 years old, how do you see its future?

A We're looking forward to our centenary in 2011 but it is a sobering thought that child cruelty and neglect cases such as Baby P show there is as great a need as ever for the sort of care and protection we provide. Our role is to ensure that we continue to develop our service

to meet the needs of children and young people and to strive continuously to improve outcomes for those in our care.

Q Why do you think it has managed to maintain this success over all those years?

A Because we care, and because we're always thinking about how we can best help the children who are placed with us. Our services are constantly evolving and we now provide a complete package, from initial assessment through to residential care in one of our seven houses, therapy, schooling, fostering and finally, supporting them into the outside world.

Q How can people get involved to help the foundation?

A There are lots of ways to help the Caldecott Foundation by giving a little time or money. There are volunteering opportunities and a regular programme of events. We enjoy working with companies, and there are plenty of ways to make donations. Visit our website at www.thecaldecottfoundation.co.uk and click on 'How You Can Help'.

Q Who inspired you when you were younger? How did they affect your life?

A I was fortunate to work early on, in different enterprises for a succession of bosses whom I liked and admired and from whom I learned a great deal. The one common feature was that they were all extremely demanding!

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■ BY MARIKE COX

A GRIEVING father whose son was killed by a speeding driver has spoken of his heartache for a hard-hitting TV advert.

Michael Bollom, from Bearsted near Maidstone, hopes the candid account of his son James's death will bring home to viewers the harsh reality that speeding can kill.

He said: "This isn't just coming from an actor on TV – this is coming from a parent who lost his child."

In the advert, which will be shown on ITV Meridian, the 50-year-old recalls James's death in December, 2005.

The 16-year-old was killed a month short of his 17th birthday when the car he was travelling in lost control in the village of Wateringbury.

He died instantly after taking the full force of the crash.

The driver was prosecuted and jailed for dangerous driving.

The life-changing consequences of the crash took a further tragic twist when James's grief-stricken mother, Samantha, took her own life three months later.

Mr Bollom believes by opening up about the tragedy on television, people will take notice and think twice about their speed while on the road.

"I want to get the message across to some of these young drivers that speeding can have tragic consequences," he said.

"If I can prevent just one death, prevent one family from going through the pain we suffered, then it will be worthwhile."

"By me doing it rather than an actor it makes it all the more real for people and therefore will have more of an impact."

Mr Bollom, who is director of a manufacturing company in Sittingbourne, was

Devastated dad's TV plea to stop speeding drivers



MESSAGE: Michael Bollom hopes his moving account of his son's death will make drivers think and (right) with James at a wedding before the tragedy which claimed his life. He has also had a book about his experiences published

approached by Kent Police to talk about his grief as part of a campaign to clamp down on speeding.

The 30-second advert was filmed at Maidstone Studios by Southside Television and will be shown on ITV from this Friday to mid-February.

"It was daunting doing the advert and

brought up a lot of sad memories," said Mr Bollom. But if helps prevent people speeding then it's been worth it."

Assistant Chief Constable Gary Beaubridge paid tribute to Mr Bollom for taking part in the campaign.

"We are grateful to Michael for having the courage to do this and to help us get the

message through that speed kills," he said.

Director of Southside Television, Martin Smith, also praised him.

He said: "He was brave to do something like this as it obviously brought memories flooding back, but he is determined James should not have died in vain."

As part of his own personal plight, Mr Bollom has also written a book entitled *Losing James: A Father Cries Too*.

It gives a poignant account of his grief and how he dealt with the tragedy that tore his world apart. He hopes it will help other families cope with bereavement.

He said: "It's going very well – Waterstone's has taken it on in two of their branches in Maidstone. I've had emails from people saying it has helped them with their own grief."

Money from sales is donated to Holding On, Letting Go, which is part of Demelza House, a children's hospice based near Sittingbourne.

The charity aims to help families cope with bereavement.

Mr Bollom said: "We have already raised £2,000. Some of the people who have read my book have also given extra donations to the charity."

• To buy *Losing James: A Father Cries Too*, email mike@boundbiographies.com or go to Waterstone's in Maidstone.

'Designer dogs' dumped by cash-strapped owners

A RISE in demand for so-called 'designer breeds' has sparked fears even more dogs will be dumped in the coming weeks and months.

The Dogs Trust says cross-breeds like the labradoodle face an increased risk of being abandoned due to their newfound popularity as short-term fashion accessories rather than lifetime companions.

Staff at the charity's rehoming centre in Canterbury are currently caring for three such animals and are concerned they may receive more in the weeks and months to come.

Manager Lizzie Reffell said: "We're seeing more designer breeds coming through the kennel system and it's quite unusual.

"These dogs are new on the scene

and are quite expensive, which may be why they are becoming increasingly popular as fashion accessories.

"But still people do not seem able to cope with them or keep them long-term. Many don't seem to understand the dogs they buy will need to be looked after for the next ten years.

"We took in quite a few labradoodles last year but the problem has become more apparent now we have three cross-breeds at once. Fortunately because they are so popular they tend to be rehomed fairly quickly."

Three dogs currently being cared for by Dogs Trust Canterbury are Ruby the puggle (pug-beagle), Benson the boxador (boxer-labrador) and Charlie the sprollie



GIVE A DOG A HOME: (l-r) Puggle Ruby, boxador Benson and sprollie Charlie are being cared for by the Dogs Trust Canterbury

(springer spaniel-collie).

Last year the BBC sparked a controversy when it dropped the annual Crufts dog show from its television schedule, citing concerns about the welfare of some of the pedigree canines on show.



(boxer-labrador)

However, Ms Reffell said there was no evidence to suggest cross-breeding caused any of the genetic defects uncovered by the broadcaster.

She added: "The dogs we've come across haven't had anything wrong



(springer spaniel-collie).

with them but as time goes on we will find out more and more about the effects of cross-breeding."

• **Anyone interested in providing a home for one of the Dogs Trust's animals can call 01227 792505.**



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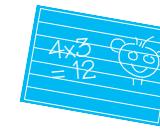
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BREAK TIME

New deputy's claim to cricketing fame

A FORMER cricket coach who trained England batsman Alastair Cook has been appointed deputy head of a well-renowned private school.

Jeremy Farrell accepted the position at Sutton Valence School, near Maidstone, after leaving his role as housemaster at a boys' schools in Bedford.

The 42-year-old deputy head taught history at his previous school, and ran the sixth-form lecture programme.

He was also in charge of rugby and cricket, which led him to coach Cook.

Mr Farrell is joined at his new home in Sutton Valence by wife Jane and their three daughters Charlotte, Olivia and Rachel.

Girls join MP Ann for tea in Commons

TWO girls who won the opportunity to shadow a Conservative parliamentary candidate will also be given the chance to experience life at Westminster.

Blaise Matthews, from Maidstone Grammar School, and Sophie Jones, of Cranbrook School, were picked by Helen Grant to follow her in the run-up to the next General Election.

As part of their prize they will also visit Maidstone and Weald MP Ann Widdecombe at the House of Commons.

Ms Grant said: "Ann Widdecombe has invited me and my two young shadows to the Palace of Westminster, Prime Minister's Questions, and tea with Ann in the House of Commons afterwards."

Pupils make history with time capsule on school site

■ BY ANNA WHITE

FUTURE generations may one day read the news published years before their time in a copy of Yourmaidstone or Kent on Sunday, currently buried beneath a school.

The two newspapers from the KOS Media group were among the items placed in a time capsule beneath the New Learning Learning Academy site, in Loose, Maidstone.

The capsule was buried under what will eventually be a state-of-the-art academy.

It is hoped that one day the box will be discovered by future students or the public and will give an insight into life at the academy and within the community during the years leading up to 2009.

In the sturdy box is a laptop, a film made by the students, stationery, a school uniform, photos, timetables, a prospectus and poems written by pupils.

The contractor for the £62million build, Carillion, also contributed to the collection with a hard hat, hi-visibility vest and the company newsletter.

To incorporate the academy's history, a crest that once belonged to the Oldborough Manor School, which was replaced by NLL in 2007, was also buried in the box.

Headteacher Guy Hewett, who covered the capsule with the first mound of soil, said: "It is exciting to think that one day a student might find this capsule and discover the great legacy of this school.

"The new building is going to be fantastic for



LEGACY: Students prepare the time capsule with head teacher Guy Hewett and representatives of Carillion

the students and they really deserve it. When they go home for summer next year they will return in September to a whole new academy.

"It's all about giving the children the best education and allowing that to continue for years to come."

Head girl Hazel Dolbear said: "I think it's really great to think that one day someone might find what we have buried.

"It's weird to think that they might have dif-

ferent technology instead of the laptop we have put in and just live in a completely different world to what we do now."

The designs include a new sports hall, with six courts, a vocational centre, outdoor playing pitches, 153 car-parking spaces, 160 bicycle spaces and six multi-use games areas. The new build will accommodate 1,100 students.

The time capsule was buried on Thursday, December 17.

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Ben Inter a shot at big time with the 'Special One'

FOOTBALL fanatic Ben Greenhalgh could swap Orpington for Italy after reaching the finals of a television competition to find the sport's next star.

The 17-year-old Darrick Wood School pupil is one of 10 youngsters battling it out for a contract with Serie A champions Inter Milan – currently managed by former Chelsea coach Jose Mourinho.

Ben's attempts to impress the self-proclaimed 'Special One' form part of the new Sky1 show Football's Next Star, which kicked off last Sunday.

Throughout the course of the seven-part series the youngsters will work with the likes of Mourinho and former England star Jamie Redknapp to hone their skills and hopefully win a contract at the San Siro.

Contract

Filming for the show – which also saw Ben rub shoulders with Real Madrid megastar Cristiano Ronaldo – was completed last October, but Ben was keeping tight-lipped about how the competition ended.

He said: 'I'm not allowed to give anything away, but it would certainly be life-changing to win the chance to play for Inter.'

'As soon as I found out I would be going to Italy for a month I knew I had to take it seriously, because you don't receive this sort of opportunity every day. You've got to believe you're going to go all the way.'

'When we were out there they were saying it

■ BY STEVE KNIGHT

was between me and one other guy, but I just tried to relax and enjoy the experience rather than get nervous and worry about things.'

Left-winger Ben earned his place in the finals after impressing the judges at one of several national roadshows, which he was entered into by his Kent youth team coach.

He eventually made the final 10 after impressing Inter youth coaches Paolo Migliavacca and Marco Monti, the latter of whom oversaw the youngsters' progress during their time in Italy and was responsible for deciding who would leave the competition from week to week.

The San Siro is a long way from Welling United's Park View Road, which was where Ben was originally planning to play his football this season.

He said: 'There were a lot of problems because I had just signed a contract with Welling before I took part in the competition, but because I was 18 I was able to get out of it.'

'In the end Welling were quite good about it, but it was quite stressful because it still hadn't been sorted out the night before the people on the show needed it to be.'

'I joined Welling because the manager [Jamie Day] said a professional club would see me and sign me up, but I felt it was a better opportunity to take part in this competition and hopefully get snapped up by Inter.'

• **Football's Next Star can be seen on Sunday at 8pm on Sky1.**



LIFE-CHANGING OPPORTUNITY: Inter Milan boss Jose Mourinho (right) is waiting to see if Ben Greenhalgh (pictured left with Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo) can win a professional contract with the current Serie A champions



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Chief Constable's future to be decided this week

KENT'S Chief Constable Mike Fuller will find out this week if he is to be offered the top job at the Crown Prosecution Service.

Mr Fuller – who is Britain's first black police chief – has been selected by Attorney General Baroness Scotland as the preferred candidate to become Chief Inspector of the CPS.

Members of the Justice Committee in the House of Commons – including Bromley and Chislehurst MP Bob Neill – were due to discuss their decision yesterday, with an official announcement expected to be made soon after.

Should Mr Fuller land the job, it is rumoured his deputy, Adrian Leppard, will fill the Chief Constable position on a temporary basis until a permanent replacement is found.

Speaking to KOS Media shortly after his name was put forward last month, Mr Fuller stressed the deal was far from done.

He said: 'I'm not gone yet, but I have been through the selection process and I've been



DECISION TIME: Chief Constable Mike Fuller

put forward as the preferred candidate, but the MPs might disagree.

'It is quite an unusual thing for the CPS to look outside the service for this role. I have engaged with the CPS from the other side of the fence, so am able to see where improvements could be made from an operational angle.'

Mr Fuller joined Kent Police as chief constable in January 2004, having previously been with the Met since starting as a cadet in 1975.

Under his leadership the county has seen the introduction of Neighbourhood Policing Teams – 14 specialist units aimed at combating low-level crime – while also securing the use of a police helicopter as part of a joint working agreement with Essex.

Mr Fuller also holds honorary doctorates of law and is a non-practising barrister, having been called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in July 2007.

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yourmaidstoneblogger

Lifelong Kent supporter Dave Mairs berates the club's decision to play a home game in south London



SO Kent's cricketers are to play a 'home' match at The Oval, home of Surrey County Cricket Club.

A joke, a hopelessly mistimed April Fool's, or perhaps a necessary move in the wake of The St Lawrence Ground's planned redevelopment... these were the first thoughts to flash through many supporters' minds.

But no, it was none of these. The decision to schedule a Twenty20 clash between Kent Spitfires and Essex Eagles was taken in the cold light of day to – in the words of acting chief executive Jamie Clifford – "spread the Kent cricket message far and wide".

And what precisely is the "Kent cricket message" that we're so keen to spread?

The county's failure to win the County Championship since 1978? A truly lamentable return of three trophies in 31 years?

Or perhaps, more likely, the abandonment of all trace of history and tradition at a club that has – admittedly perhaps too much – placed great stock by such values.

Whatever the answer, thankfully the initial marketing drivel has been replaced by a more honest explanation: we're doing it for the money.

The truth is certainly more palatable than any talk of the Kent cricket message (spare us!) but, forgetting the weight of the coffers, what's the real cost?

Even if The Oval venture proves a financial triumph, Kent appear to be behaving like some awe-struck kid brother.

"People should come and watch us at what is an iconic venue," Mr Clifford has told us. "It's like having a final early in the season."

The day our county cricket lost its way

No it isn't. It's like watching Kent v Essex at The Oval when we should be watching the fixture at Canterbury, Tunbridge Wells or Beckenham.

The only time Kent should be playing at The Oval is when they face Surrey in an away fixture – which, of course, is what it is.

Kent supporters invariably turn out in big numbers for those matches, ironically making them feel like home games.

That is the triumph for Kent and their fans, not the club's administration doffing the cap and begging to be allowed to party at the home of the supposed big boys.

As a Kent supporter, I find the whole thing humiliating. Doubtless the Essex supporters at The Oval on July 9 will be quick to point out quite how laughable Kent are making themselves look.

It's the very essence of team sport in this country – there are home ties and there are away ties.

In that respect, the quality of your ground or facilities doesn't matter – some of the

trickiest away challenges are at the grottiest places.

Not, you understand, that I'm saying The St Lawrence is grotty. It isn't – it's a lovely place to watch cricket – and it's Kent's home.

Can you imagine Lancashire playing home games at Headingley (Yorkshire's HQ), or Yorkshire hosting games at Old Trafford in Manchester?

Of course not – both clubs have enough respect for their traditions and, importantly, their supporters.

Perhaps at the core of this is the concept of what county cricket is all about.

With the club having fielded disappointingly few home-bred players over recent years, what makes us Kent?

It clearly isn't that fact that we have a team of cricketers who mostly hail from the county – because we don't – so the only credible answer is the fact that we play in Kent.

As the fans sing, "We are Kent". And that is where, when we are competing at home, we should play our cricket.

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him on the details above. If you want to be the next Maidstone blogger then all you have to do is submit an article to us (of around 550 words)

and email it to the news editor. And don't forget, for all the latest news and video from your town log-on to www.yourmaidstone.co.uk.

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The late, much-loved actor, family-loving Paul Newman, would appreciate the idea. He made his first batch of Newman's Own dressing in a bathtub, bottling them in old wine bottles as gifts for family and friends. All his creative energies went into producing a great taste without using any of the preservatives, artificial colours or flavours that were routinely added 27 years ago. Today, Paul's dressings and marinades are still made to his original recipes using only the best all-natural ingredients.

Try his top-selling Newman's Own Italian Dressing – a delicious blend of red wine, vinegar, extra virgin olive oil,

lemon juice and punchy garlic – drizzled over roasted vegetables and piping hot pasta. Balsamic Vinaigrette, made with distinctive aged balsamic, is just made for tomatoes. Paul's creamy dressings add body and character to winter salads and Newman's Own Ranch Dressing, a true American classic, is terrific as a dressing and a dip.

Back in 1982, just after his first batch of dressing was marketed, Paul decided that any profit should go to worthy causes. To date, Paul and The Newman's Own Foundation have given more than \$265m to thousands of charities around the world, including many in the UK.

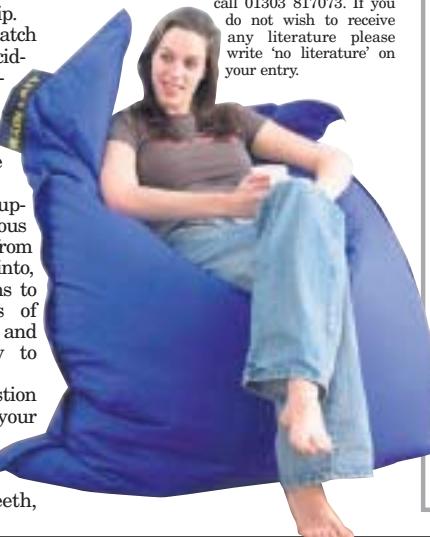
To get you in the mood for cosy suppers at home, we have a fabulous Plain Lazy bean bag worth £149 from www.monsters2u.com to snuggle into, a set of three Paul Newman films to put on the DVD and bottles of Newman's Own Italian Dressing and Ranch Dressing to give away to THREE lucky readers.

To enter, simply answer the question below and send a postcard with your email address, postal address and daytime telephone number to Paul Newman Competition, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth,

Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR. The closing date is February 10, 2010.

Question: At what year did Paul Newman decide that profit from the salad dressing should go to worthy causes?

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Creamy smoked haddock penne

Serves 4

Per serving: 307 kcal, 9.9g fat, 1g saturated fat

Ingredients:

50g smoked haddock fillet
150g sugarsnap peas, halved, or frozen peas

300g penne or your favourite pasta shape
8tbsp Newman's Own Ranch Dressing:

3tbsp capers

Zest 1 lemon

Small bunch flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

1. Place fish in a large frying pan, cover with boiling water and simmer for 8 minutes. Drain and leave until cool enough to handle. Remove skin and any bones, and flake into large chunks.
2. Meanwhile boil pasta according to pack instructions, adding the peas for the last 2 mins of cooking. Drain, return to the pan, and stir in dressing, capers and lemon zest. Warm through for a minute, remove from the heat.
3. Gently stir in haddock and parsley and serve straight away.



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TALK TIME

BILL MOSS

The town centre manager reflects on Christmas in Maidstone and what he hopes 2010 will bring to the borough.



What was your highlight of the recent festivities?
The successful switching-on of the Christmas lights and the associated street theatre and entertainment.

Were you pleased with the line-up and turn out for the Christmas light switch on?
The turn-out from the public was as good as it always is. The people of Maidstone love the day and Town Centre Management (TCM) is delighted to put it all together, including the fabulous performers who filled the streets with fun, music and spectacle.

Away from the cheerful side of Christmas, tell us about the partnership between TCM and Maidstone police that was formed to tackle purse thefts?
TCM lead the town centre crime reduction partnership and work very closely with the police.

Last Christmas purse and handbag thieves specifically targeted elderly ladies, and we were determined not to let it happen again.

The planning for this year's campaign started in September, and has proved hugely successful.

What are your New Year hopes for Maidstone?
My New Year hopes for Maidstone are simple. Continuing prosperity, continuing investment and continuing growth. I would love everybody to have the same belief in our town that I have! We really do have a town centre to be proud of so let's all be proud of it.

YOUR LETTERS



They sent my son home from school

I was told by a member of staff that my son has been sent home for defiance for refusing to give up his coat.

He had a letter on him from myself stating he has asthma. Mr Lawson told my son he was not interested in his letter. How strange now that Mr Lawson insists no-one was excluded.

Well my son certainly was, how strange though that they didn't send him home with a letter. When I told him to stand firm on Tuesday until he had a letter he was allowed to remain at school!

Elizabeth Lynch, Aylesford
Comment posted on
www.yourmaidstone.co.uk

The headteacher has a duty of care

As a teacher myself I am simply flabbergasted by the head's lack of care for his pupils.

Teacher's are supposed to act 'in loco parentis'. I see no evidence of that here. If a parent confiscated a child's coat in -4 degrees I'm pretty sure social services would be concerned at the very least. Of course uniform is important, and all schools have



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have their coat taken off them on both Monday and Tuesday.

She also suffers from a form of epilepsy. It seems to me that the school is asking us to put our children's education above their health and well being. Also, my daughter was one of the students to receive help from the school for the uniform, which at the time did not state the coat was compulsory. As the school has stated, continued breaking of the uniform code will result in that pupil being excluded.

I have decided to keep my daughter off school until this extreme weather is over as I see this as preferable to her having exclusion on her record.

What makes things harder is I am also disabled so money is very tight and it's not like parents can apply for grants towards school uniform from the Government anymore.

Jenny Brook
By email



COMMENT ONLINE TOO

NOT only can you use email and letters to respond to our stories, don't forget you can comment via our website too.

Beneath most stories on the www.yourmaidstone.co.uk website there is the facility to leave your comments on whatever YOU thought of the online article. To leave your remarks, simply click on the 'Add your comments' link and tell us what you think. And remember, www.yourmaidstone.co.uk is updated daily, bringing you the latest, breaking news from across Maidstone as well as our villages. We will include the best on these pages too – ensuring your comments reach the widest possible audience.

In addition, if you find your newsagent, supermarket or petrol station runs out of Yourmaidstone before you've picked up your copy, you never need to miss out. On www.yourmaidstone.co.uk you can access, for free, the full newspaper in our highly acclaimed e-editions.

I will be keeping my child at home

My daughter is a student at this school and was one of the ones to

Their health is more important

I am a parent of two pupils at Aylesford Sports College.

My son Simon is in year 11 and my daughter Shanice Miles is in sixth form. I received a text message on Monday morning from my son, saying the school had taken his coat off him. I drove to the school before I went to work as my son had told me he was freezing. I told my son to meet me as I was in reception, with that Mr Lawson walked by and I spoke to him about my son's coat.

Mr Lawson told me that black coats were not part of the uniform and they provide school coats on sale at the school. I

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explained that I had the flu and did not want my son to get this too as the weather was very cold.

Mr Lawson said Simon will not be going outside during school hours and will stay indoors in the warm to prevent getting cold. Mr Lawson explained that these coats had been part of the uniform for three years. I have only ever seen the school coats to be thin and have never seen warm school coats.

I think that in this cold weather the school taking coats off the pupils is just pathetic. Teachers walk about with thick coats and pupils are made to walk about in t-shirts because they have had their coats taken off them or sent home because they refuse to give their coats up.

The school has also taken hats, scarves and glove off the children. I cannot make sense of it all. The school would rather the children get pneumonia than see the school uniform messed up.

Debra Miles
By email

It's time to improve our sports facilities

With the momentum for the Olympic Games increasing and

sport high on the agenda is the time not right, for the providers in Maidstone of this country's most popular sports – namely football, rugby and cricket – to come together to discuss ways to develop new facilities? We need to provide training and competing opportunities that meet the aspirations of all our men and women at all levels of their sport.

Sport development must not be restricted by lack of local quality provision. There is a need for a centre of excellence for sport and this can only be progressed if the key players come together now to discuss such development.

Borough councillor Malcolm Robertson
By email

Challenge yourself to support vial charity

As an Olympian and patron of Meningitis UK, I would like to encourage your readers to consider adding a challenge to their list of New Year's resolutions for 2010.

The charity has a wide selection of awe-inspiring and exciting activities for people to choose from, which will not only help them to get fit but also to raise money for a great cause.

Aside from places in many popular

running events, opportunities also include skydives and expeditions both overseas and in the UK.

Ideas close to home are a cycle from London to Paris or climbing the Three Peaks in under 24 hours.

There are also more unusual adventures like a ten-day cycle across Cuba, a Mongolian horse riding trip or a Thailand jungle expedition. Expeditions include treks, bike rides, mountain climbs, white water rafting and sailing. Challenges cover various difficulty levels, so there's something for everyone.

I would urge you to fundraise for Meningitis UK because six families a week still lose a loved one to meningitis, and many hundreds are left with devastating after-affects.

I fell ill with meningitis and meningococcal septicaemia when I was 15, which left me in a coma for three days. Thankfully, I was lucky to pull through and be able to go on to achieve my sailing dreams.

With your help, Meningitis UK will be able to beat this disease and spare thousands of families the heartache of losing a loved one in the future. To find out more about setting yourself a challenge visit www.meningitisuk.org/get-involved or call 0117 373 73 73.

Sarah Ayton
Olympic gold medallist and Meningitis UK patron



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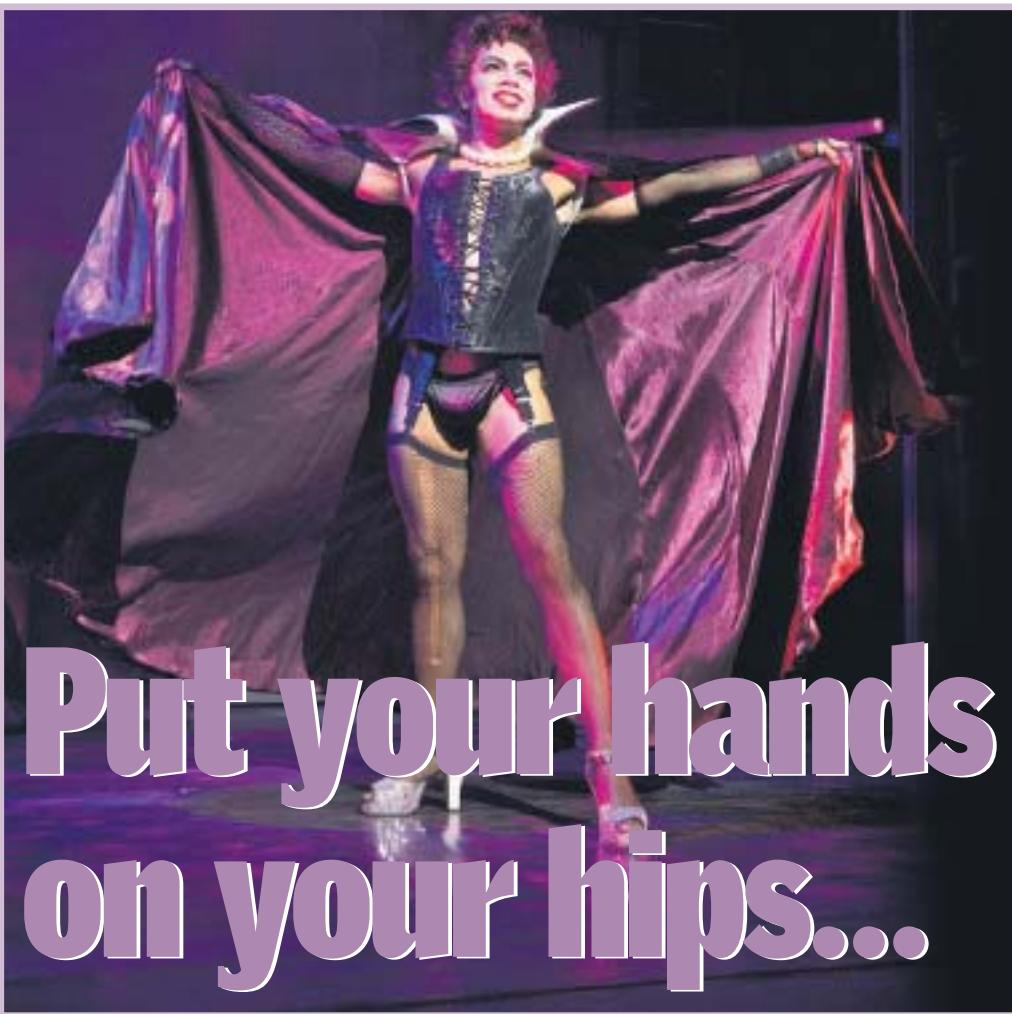
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Put your hands on your hips...

Party with Frank 'n' Furter and friends when the Rocky Horror Show arrives at the Orchard Theatre. Coming soon

PREPARE to party in the company of a sweet transvestite when The Rocky Horror Show rolls into town.

For more than 30 years, the sumptuous Frank 'n' Furter has been seducing his fellow characters and audiences all over the world. Created by Richard O'Brien, this rocking musical features unforgettable songs, mind-blowing characters and a famous dance routine which has been filling dance floors for decades.

The charismatic lead figure is played by David Bedella, an Olivier Award-winning actor whose previous credits include television drama Holby City, musicals Chess and Hedwig & the Angry Inch and the controversial Jerry Springer the Opera.

The Rocky Horror Show is a wild and inventive show that follows the exploits of an engaged couple, Brad and Janet, who find themselves stranded in the middle of nowhere when the car breaks down. They are forced to seek refuge at a nearby castle, but the whiter-than-white couple soon find themselves in a world they had never dreamed of until that fateful night.

turbed the scientist in the middle of a horrifying experiment – he believes he has discovered the secret of life.

Frank 'n' Furter is pleased with his creation, the blond and hunky Frank 'n' Furter, but he commits terrible acts in his pursuit of scientific advancement. Forced to stay the night at the castle, Brad and Janet are given separate bedrooms. But it soon appears that Frank 'n' Furter, a bisexual transvestite, has more than just laboratory experiments on his mind.

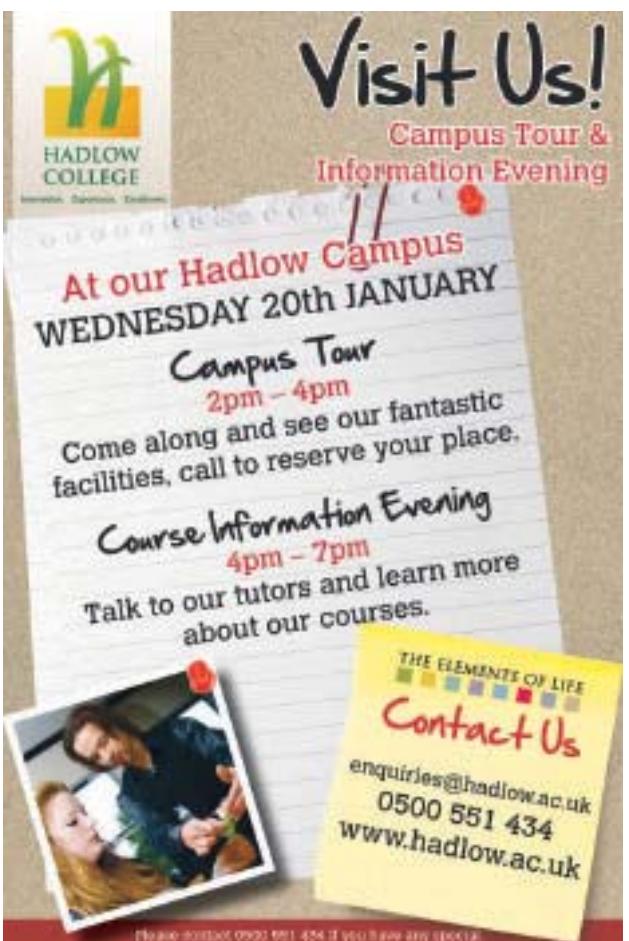
Featuring unforgettable songs such as the Time Warp, Sweet Transvestite and Dammit, Janet, this show is a great night out for seasoned fans and newcomers alike. Fancy dress is encouraged, so unleash your wild side and get ready for a night you will never forget.

Tickets are priced from £18, concessions available. Performances start at 8pm, Monday to Thursday, and 6pm and 9pm on Friday and Saturday. To book call the box office on 01322 220000 or visit the website at www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.



ROCKY HORROR SHOW

Monday, January 25 to
Saturday, January 30
Orchard Theatre, Dartford



with

JANE CONNOLLYEmail jane.connolly@kosmedia.co.uk**JOHANN STRAUSS
GALA**

Sunday, January 24
Assembly Hall Theatre,
Tunbridge Wells

DISCOVER the opulent world of 19th century Vienna with the enchanting Johann Strauss Gala.

Formed more than 30 years ago, the gala pays tribute to the 'Waltz King' and transports audiences back in time to the opulence of Austria, at a time when a fascinating new dance was emerging. The peasant folk dance had been elevated to the lavish ballrooms of Vienna and dancers welcomed the chance to move away from the stately minuet, embracing the freedom of the waltz.

Johann Strauss Sr was a renowned light music composer who soon realised how popular the waltz was becoming. The Strauss family held



something of a monopoly on the waltz and polka as the years went on, meeting the demands of Viennese revellers with music that is still enjoyed today.

A celebration of the most popular music, dance and song from the Strauss family, the gala is a magical show

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**MAIDSTONE LEISURE****Whoopi! It's Sister Act at the London Palladium**

ENJOY a heavenly theatre experience by joining a trip to see Sister Act at the London Palladium.

The successful film has been transformed into a musical, co-produced by Whoopi Goldberg who starred in the movie. The coach leaves at 12.30pm today and again at 5pm on Wednesday, January 20. Tickets are from £50. Book on 01622 758611 or at www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk.

The Price is right for a great night of comedy

LAUGH off the winter chills with an evening of stand-up comedy at the Walnut Tree in Maidstone.

Renowned for hosting a regular adult comedy night, the pub in Tonbridge Road welcomes Tom Price on Thursday – a warm and engaging comic with lots of television credits. The laughter starts at 9.30pm and admission is free. For more details call the pub on 01622 720926.

Rock to the sounds of the 70s in Maidstone

GET ready to rock out as the Clintstones bring you the best songs by iconic bands.

The band plays hits from the 70s to the present day, taking their cue from greats such as Queen, Thin Lizzy and Black Sabbath but also drawing on contemporary influences. The Clintstones can be seen at Earls in Earl Street, Maidstone, on Friday. For more information about the venue call 01622 751286.

Tell us all about your upcoming events

WOULD you like to see your concert, production or event publicised on these pages?

Send full details – including dates, times, ticket prices and how to book – to jane.connolly@kosmedia.co.uk or by post to the address on page 2. Submissions should arrive at least two weeks before the preferred date of publication.

If possible, include a good photograph.

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**THE BOOTLEG SHADOWS**

Saturday, January 30
Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone



ONE of the greatest rock 'n' roll bands of all times is celebrated by The Bootleg Shadows.

When Hank B Marvin, Bruce Welch, Jet Harris and Tony Meehan recorded Apache in July 1960, they launched an instrumental career that would make the Shadows one of the most successful British bands ever. Since then they have achieved 35 hits of their own, as well as another 33 with Cliff Richard, and won their place in the annals of popular music.

Their immaculate look, synchronised dance moves and clean sound won legions of fans,

while aspiring guitarists everywhere dreamed of stepping into the spotlight with their own Fender Stratocaster.

This fantasy concert encompasses the band's amazing career from the 60s to the early 80s, featuring such unforgettable tracks as Foot Tapper, Man of Mystery, Atlantis, Wonderful Land, Kon Tiki, Don't Cry For Me Argentina, FBI and many more. Along with the great music, there is plenty of humour to make the evening go with a swing.

The show starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £15/£14. Book online at www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk or call the box office on 01622 758611.



Stanley Spencer, Eric Gill, Craigie Aitchison and Graham Sutherland.

Mascalls Gallery is open from 10am to 5pm, Monday to Thursday, and 11am to 4pm on Friday and Saturday. For more information visit www.mascallsgallery.org or call 01892 839039.

EDGE OF ABSTRACTION

Running until Saturday, February 13
Mascalls Gallery, Paddock Wood



THIS year's programme of fascinating exhibitions gets underway with Edge of Abstraction.

The exhibition, the first of many captivating events, showcases the work of British abstract art pioneers. In the mid-20th century, a movement of artists based around St Ives in Cornwall brought the art form to the fore and work by all the major protagonists can be seen in the exhibition.

Another thought-provoking collection of images can be viewed in Cross Purposes, an exhibition which opens in March. Exploring the meaning and emotive power of the crucifixion, it features work by 20 important artists from the 20th and 21st century who have used the image of the cross in both secular and spiritual senses.

Marc Chagall's drawings for the stained glass of Tudeley Church form part of the exhibition, the first time they have been seen in the UK. Other featured artists include

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SEX & DRUGS & ROCK & ROLL (15)



Distinguished by an incendiary lead performance from Andy Serkis, *Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll* is a biopic of 1970s punk pioneer Ian Dury that is as unconventional and fantastical as the man himself.

THE ROAD (15)



The future isn't bright, not in the slightest, in John Hillcoat's Oscar-tipped, post-apocalyptic thriller, adapted by Joe Penhall from the novel by Cormac McCarthy, who also wrote *No Country For Old Men*.

IT'S COMPLICATED (15)



Actress Meryl Streep affirms her credentials as one of the best comic actresses working today in *It's Complicated* and Alec Baldwin is irresistible as the bullish alpha male determined to turn back time.

Spierig's blood-sucking world is drained of plot

■ BY DAMON SMITH

“LIFE’S a bitch then you don’t die,” grumbles a blood-thirsty vampire in *Daybreakers*.

Set nine years hence, in a world decimated by a mysterious plague which has transformed the vast majority of the population into fanged fiends, Peter and Michael Spierig’s sci-fi thriller injects fresh blood into the creatures of the night.

The film retains the familiar iconography: the vampires have no reflection; humans slay bloodsuckers with a stake through the heart; and the carnivorous beasties fry to a crisp in direct sunlight.

Environmental

All that is missing is a bulb of garlic, a protective church cross and a couple of busty wenches, heaving to be bitten.

However, there’s nothing remotely camp or erotic about the Spierigs’ vampires: they are everyday folk who commute to work in the dead of night and queue for coffee infused with blood.

Humans account for five per cent of the population and are captured by the vampires to be drained of their blood.

In a clear nod to current environmental concerns, this precious resource has almost run dry and the dominant species faces possible extinction unless it can engineer a blood substitute.

Undead scientist Edward (Ethan Hawke), who was turned by his soldier brother Frankie, is a leading researcher at Bromley Marks, the world leader in blood pharmacy, run by the conniving Charles Bromley (Sam Neill).

Working alongside colleague Christopher,



HUMAN TOUCH: Ethan Hawke plays undead scientist Edward in *Daybreakers*, who is trying to create a blood substitute

Edward struggles to create a stable, synthetic substitute. Sympathetic to the human cause, the scientists meet human survivor Audrey, who in turn introduces Edward to resistance leader Elvis (Willem Dafoe).

They have an alternative solution to the blood crisis: cure vampirism.

Daybreakers opens with an infected girl writing a suicide note and waiting for the sun to rise.

Stylish credits quickly transport us to April 2019 and an earthy colour palette of greys, browns and black: it’s cold, clinical and far removed from the gothic splendor of bygone vampire yarns.

The neat central premise provides plenty of scope for the Spierigs to create a believable and detailed universe but after an hour or so,

the narrative runs out of steam, most notably in the bungled relationship between Bromley and his daughter Alison.

Special effects are slathered in blood and goo and the directors orchestrate a fast-paced chase, which sees Edward scorched by rays of sunlight from the bullet holes in his car.

Hawke and his co-stars are suitably lifeless – Neill arches an eyebrow every now and then – while Dafoe appropriates all of the best lines, including a hysterical analogy between human survival in a vampire world and sleeping with a particularly fragrant prostitute.

An imminent, gory death is no time to lose your sense of humour.

DAYBREAKERS Certificate 15

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YOUR TV REVIEW

■ BY TOM BETTS

TAKE ME OUT

ITV 1, 7.30pm, Saturday

THE TV dating show must be a hard thing to get right.

Let's face it, going out on the pull is a national pastime – it always has been and always will be – but there are very few shows that have really addressed the subject. It must be the TV equivalent of trying to nail down jelly.

Blind Date is the most obvious example, but despite dragging on for decades, that was hardly edgy or indeed relevant – especially as it was so obviously staged.

Then there was Singled Out on MTV and Chris Evans's ill-fated Boys and Girls, which sunk without trace in the early noughties.

Other than that, I'm on to even more obscure shows, and that's just weird for a subject that 99 per cent of us are interested in.

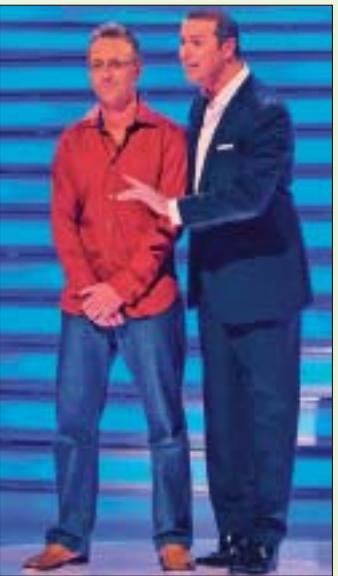
I mean, if you're not already in a relationship then you're probably thinking about getting in one – and setting up other people is a sport for some.

So fair play to ITV, who have taken a run at it in the form of Take Me Out.

With lad-in-chief Paddy McGuinness at the wheel we meet 30 single women who set about running the rule over several guys hoping to secure a date.

After he has been probed and verbally prodded by all concerned, the girls decide whether to let their interest slide and buzz out, or stay in the game.

Particularly cruel is the way that many drop out as soon as he says "Hello, my name is...", showing that when it comes to judging a book by its cover women can be just as bad as men.



PLAYING CUPID: Paddy McGuinness hosts ITV's newest dating programme Take Me Out

After the set amount of rounds our subject must choose which girl to take out from those who remain, adding a bit of tension to matters.

Credit to the guys who come forward, as watching the lights go out on your love life on national telly must be a bit embarrassing.

One bloke's humiliation was total when he ended up with nobody declaring an interest.

In true Blind Date-style we get an update on how the big dates went the following week.

It's hardly highbrow entertainment, but it's jovial enough and makes a change from the endless stream of Saturday night talent shows we have been bombarded with in recent months, even if it is, in truth, a bit of a meat market.

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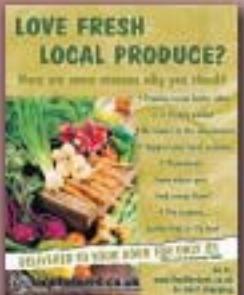
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YOUR WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

BY RUSSELL GRANT



AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19)

YOUR mind, body and spirit are intimately connected. If you don't feel well, it may be because you're not emotionally fulfilled. Spending more time on pursuits that make you happy is essential. Steer clear of people whose religious or political beliefs are offensive to you.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aquarius** 09067-531762

TAURUS (Apr 21-May 20)

A PERIOD of study is coming to a close and you're a little sad as a result. The prospect of finding a practical use for your knowledge is a little daunting. Job opportunities are few and far between. Don't beat yourself up for this turn of events. After all, it's beyond your control.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Taurus** 09067-531753

LEO (Jul 24-Aug 23)

YOU long for privacy, but work demands keep crashing into your personal life. Share your knowledge and know-how with others. That way, people won't have to run to you whenever there is an emergency. It's the only sensible course of action to take.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Leo** 09067-531756

SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22)

ALL the experience in the world has not prepared you for the challenges ahead. You just have to trust your instincts when it comes to dealing with a troubled relative. Whatever the reason for this animosity, you've got to address it in a direct fashion at the start of the year.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Scorpio** 09067-531759

PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20)

RECENTLY, you've been neglecting friends, choosing to focus on a lover or youngster's needs instead. Now you've got to rejoin your social circle. Of course, you may be met with mixed reviews. 2010 is a year for building bridges and strengthening ties.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Pisces** 09067-531763

GEMINI (May 22-Jun 21)

A SOURCE of income will be cut off, forcing you to find another way to earn money. Unfortunately, the kind of work you enjoy will be elusive. You might have to take a job just for the sake of paying your bills. Try not to dwell on your disappointment. There is a silver lining.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Gemini** 09067-531754

LIBRA (Sep 24-Oct 23)

CAREER matters could come to a head in 2010. It may be necessary to decide between work and family. A once in a lifetime opportunity depends on your moving to a different location. Putting this much distance between you and your loved ones makes you nervous.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Libra** 09067-531758

VIRGO (Aug 24-Sep 23)

FRIENDS are impatient for you to join their ranks, but you're not ready yet. A romance, or promising creative project commands every ounce of your attention. Some will accuse you of being selfish for neglecting loved ones, but nobody realises how dependent they are on you.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Virgo** 09067-531757

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 22)

SEXUAL hang ups are making you miserable. If you've had trouble maintaining a long-term relationship, think about getting some counselling. Adopting a healthier attitude to life and love is critical to your happiness. You can find the kind of love you've always wanted this year.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Sagittarius** 09067-531760

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20)

AN intimate relationship needs to undergo some serious changes. The problem is, this person has taken all of your sacrifices for granted. You have to consider whether you want to stay committed to such a relationship. Set the tone for the coming year by putting your needs first.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Capricorn** 09067-531761

Calls cost 75p per minute. Service provided by g8wave London N7

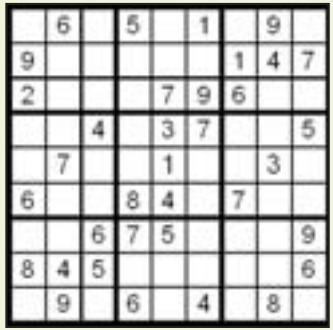
CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

No120

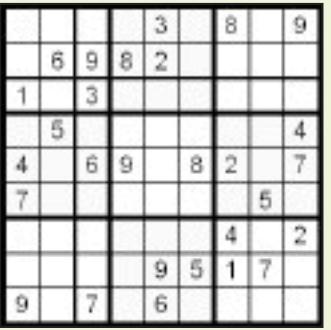
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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9

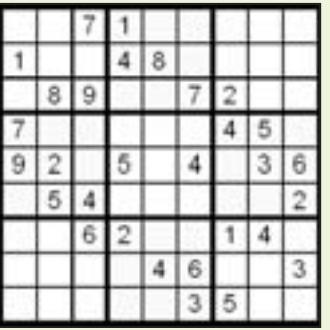
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MEDIUM



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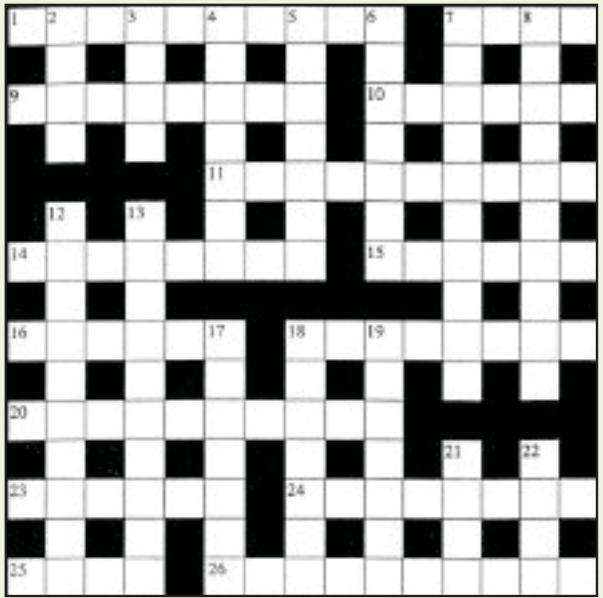


CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- Stair orn part of ship (6-4)
- Only one per person but several people can make one (4)
- Webb waving goodbye to town in South Wales (4,4)
- Find it painful to be an informer (6)
- Single bit of scientific research? (10)
- Aromatic river ebbing fast (8)
- Novice, your first musician (6)
- Purple plant (6)
- Missile entered news broadcast (8)
- Agree to keep in touch (10)
- Mark, Greek character went round Thailand (6)
- Something put on caught out of harmful habit (8)
- Brother cultivated more than half the berries (4)
- In all directions at each place in question (10)
- Part of ear used to hear cello better (4)
- Go west then north for the dress (4)
- Bar part performed with ease, say (7)
- I, say, notice rudimentary organ (7)
- Makes trellis camouflage flighty creature (7)
- Great outcry when colourful racehorse rose (4,6)
- Symptomatic? (10)
- It flies the police about over the river (10)
- Encourage unfashionable rogue to take right flag (5,5)
- Locates variety that is in proportion (2,5)
- Ordered bird in patterned fabric (7)
- Boy with unknown time of fame in March (4,3)
- Long to take the item with honour (4)
- Number said to be in favour (4)

SCRIBBLE HERE



QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- Boxing match (10)
- Wader (4)
- Thaw (8)
- Amend (6)
- Feasting (10)
- Plundered (8)
- Clothing container (6)
- Beset with bad luck (6)
- Talkative person (8)
- Very quietly (10)
- Raiser (anag.) (6)
- Hypocritical (3-5)
- Constellation near Draco (4)
- Nap (5,5)

DOWN

- Undersized pig (4)
- Zilch (4)
- Distasteful lodgings (4-3)
- Gathered corn left by reaper (7)
- Per (7)
- Request (10)
- Details (3,4)
- Clearness of the atmosphere (10)
- Egyptian port (10)
- Female side (7)
- Bristle (anag.) (7)
- Study of the earth (7)
- West African country (4)
- Writing-table (4)

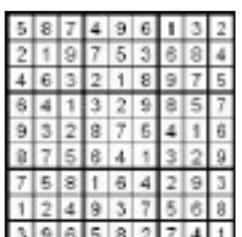
LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS No119

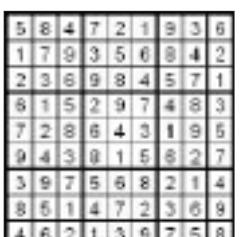
EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



Answers to all of this week's quizzes can be found on our website

CRYPTIC SOLUTION No119

ACROSS: 1 Jaunting-car 9 Stanza 10
 Ailment 12 Reroute 14 Dowager 15 Six
 thousand 16 Two 17 Mod 19 Rallying-cry
 22 Twelfth 23 Necktie 24 Venison 25
 Bleach 26 Fleet Street. **DOWN:** 2 Anthrax
 3 Nonsuch 4 Ida 5 Grand Canyon 6 Allowed
 7 Weight 8 Stereotyped 11 Presumptive 13
 Equal chance 18 Duenna 19 Refusal 20
 Nuclear 21 Cuticle 25 Bus.

QUICK SOLUTION No120

ACROSS: 1 Prizewinner 4 Tailor 5 Intercede 15
 10 Rescues 11 Mixed 18 Bimonthly 20
 13 Alembic 16 Tint 17 Distill 18 Blister 19 Geology
 21 Mail 22 Desk
DOWN: 2 Zebra 24 Twofold 25
 3 Plasterino 23 Sera 24 Twofold 25
 4 Lure 26 Party 5 Intercede 6 Trimming 7
 7 Zebra 8 Intercede 9 Plasterino 10
 11 Alembic 12 Rescues 13 Tailor 14 Blister
 15 Geology 16 Tint 17 Distill 18 Bimonthly 20

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PROPERTY NEWS

Slump increases choice for first-time buyers

FIRST-time buyers are reaping the benefit of the British property slump.

Properties in almost 40 per cent of areas of the UK are now within their price range, a study claimed.

The average first-time buyer property could now be bought by someone on average earnings in 39 per cent of local authority districts, according to the Halifax bank.

The situation is a marked improvement on 2007, when homes in only six per cent of areas could be bought by someone on average earnings.

Potential first-time buyers on average pay would need to have spent about 27 per cent of their disposable income on mortgage payments in November 2009, compared to the 50 per cent they would have had to spend in June 2007.

The improvement in affordability has come through a combination of lower interest rates and house price falls.

But many first-time buyers have been unable to take advantage of the situation, due to tighter lending criteria.

Figures from the Council of Mortgage Lenders show the average person buying their first home with a mortgage put down a deposit of 25 per cent of their property's value for most of 2009.

The average price of a property bought by a first-time buyer was £133,794 in 2009, 10 per cent less than in 2008.

Rents likely to rise as new instructions fall

THE Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) expects to see rent rises in the coming months.

In its residential lettings survey covering the third quarter of 2009, surveyors reported that the number of rental properties coming on to the market fell, for the first time since January 2008.

Optimism over rents has therefore increased for the first time since July 2008, with only 4 per cent of surveyors still reporting falling, rather than rising, rents.

In addition, 22 per cent of respondents expected rents to rise rather than fall in the next three months, as a net balance of 11 per cent of surveyors saw new instructions falling, rather than rising.

The report states: "This is in stark contrast to levels seen late last year when the housing market was still suffering from falling prices and many would-be sellers were turning to the lettings market when their houses failed to sell."



Estate agents see mixed fortunes for coming year

■ BY NICK AMES

EXPERTS have been looking into their crystal balls to predict the property market's future over the next 12 months, with varying results.

While Hamptons International and Chesterton Humberts expect prices to rise by 3 to 5 per cent and 2 per cent respectively during the course of this year, their fellow estate agent Savills predicts falls of 6.6 per cent.

This time last year, the doom and gloom surrounding the property market were unremitting from all quarters, with even estate agents – usually accused of talking up the market – predicting a continuing slide.

However, according to most market analysts, they were proved wrong in many ways.

In most cases, first-time buyers remained shut out of the market by the banks for most of 2009, tumbling mortgage rates meant property ownership became much more affordable for those who already owned – helping keep repossessions below the high levels predicted.

Equally significant was the shortage of property.

Holding out for higher prices, homeowners



have been reluctant to put their houses up for sale, leaving buyers to fight amongst themselves. The inevitable result has been a rising market, where overseas purchasers, lured by the weak pound, have added to the competition.

The Bank of England is an important factor.

Most commentators expect the Bank rate to remain at its record low of 0.5 per cent for a good few months. The next movement must be upwards, even though it could be some years before it returns to the high of 5.75 per cent reached at the peak of the market in the second half of 2007.

Predicting the balance of supply and demand remains more difficult.

Also crucial is what will happen to demand, which could be set back by rising unemployment, the continuing squeeze on incomes and an end to the stamp duty holiday on homes priced from £125,000 to £175,000.

Hometrack, the property data company, reported a 2.2 per cent drop in new-buyer registrations last month – the first such fall since January 2009.

"Rich households could continue to put upward pressure on prices in localised markets in 2010," said Richard Donnell, its director of research.

"However, a sustainable recovery in the housing market needs a broader base of buyers."

Uncertainty ahead of this spring's general election could add to caution.

Whatever the overall figure, there seems little doubt that Kent, London and the rest of the south east will continue to outperform the rest of the country this year, and into 2011 as well.

Protect your home as mercury falls

THE winter months are now upon us and website Confused.com is offering homeowners advice on how homes can be kept warm while temperatures outside are frosty.

Freezing conditions can burst pipes, along with heavy gusts of wind which can damage buildings and roofs.

Snowfall can also spell travelling trouble for those needing to get from A to B. All elements can result in problems for people who are caught unaware of a frosty mother nature.

Darren Black, head of home insurance at Confused.com said: "Winter is the time when all homeowners want to have nice cosy homes for some respite from the cold.

"In order to create this warm, safe haven, essential checks need to be carried out. Prevention is certainly better than cure when it comes to an emergency in the home, so people need to clear out guttering, lag pipes and wrap up any outside taps."

Advice from Confused.com which will help minimise home disasters includes:

- Clear the guttering and drain pipes of any leaves and debris. This will reduce the risk of blockages occurring.
- Cut back trees and large hedges which could cause damage if they are blown down.



- Wrap up outside taps with material which will act as a jacket from the cold.
- Chimneys should be swept regularly.
- Make sure that your loft is insulated, preventing valuable heat from escaping.
- If you are leaving the home for a while, do not switch the heating off. If you turn thermostats down in a frost, pipes will burst resulting in water damage.

- Make sure your boiler is serviced on a regular basis. As winter puts strains on them, checks need to be done to ensure they can cope under the additional heating pressure.
- When the heating is switched on, carbon monoxide detectors are a good idea. These will alert you to any dangerous levels of the chemical within the home. In order to avoid such a leak, regular boiler checks are essential.

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Burham | £210,000 - £230,000
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 • Double Glazing, No Forward Chain
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Ditton | £180,000 - £200,000
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**EAST MALLING**

An excellent 4 bedroom home conveniently situated in a quiet close near East Malling's historic church and about 1/2 mile from the station. Sitting room; Dining room; Study. Pretty walled rear garden. [West Malling 01732 842668](tel:01732 842668)

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4 double bedroom detached house on approx 1/4 Acre plot with extensive parking, spacious Kitchen/Diner and garden. [West Malling 01732 842668](tel:01732 842668)

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Three bedroom Ragstone Cottage in a rural location with views to surrounding countryside. Attractively presented, having been refurbished throughout in recent years. [West Malling 01732 842668](tel:01732 842668)

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Extended 3 bedroom semi detached cottage situated in a superb position adjacent to open countryside with panoramic views over surrounding farmland and beyond. NO CHAIN [West Malling 01732 842668](tel:01732 842668)

**LEYBOURNE**

Four bedroom detached house set on a corner position on this popular development. [West Malling 01732 842668](tel:01732 842668)

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Luxury ground floor apartment in converted Mill offering spacious accommodation in the heart of East Malling village and featuring enclosed view to stream in Dining room. [West Malling 01732 842668](tel:01732 842668)

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Unique two bedroom mews cottage in the heart of the High Street, featuring an open-plan modern Kitchen/Diner, spacious Living area and Mezzanine level over Kitchen. no chain. [West Malling 01732 842668](tel:01732 842668)



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Maidstone £147,950

A two bedroom terraced home both with built in wardrobes. Re fitted kitchen, gas central heating and sealed unit double glazing. There is also a landscaped garden and allocated parking.

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Vinters Park, Offers in excess of £162,500

CHAIN FREE. An improved end of terraced home with no ongoing chain. Benefits from a re-fitted kitchen with appliances and is newly carpeted throughout. Garden, garage and parking.

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Maidstone £89,950

A Grade II listed three bedroom end of terrace cottage located in the town centre. The accommodation is arranged over three floors and there is no forward chain.

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Maidstone £116,000

A three bedroom terraced home with off road parking and no forward chain. This property benefits from a large rear garden and is Stamp Duty Free.

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Maidstone £125,000

A two bedroom end of terrace home with two receptions together with a modern fitted kitchen and bathroom. Gas central heating, double glazing and a low maintenance garden.

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Maidstone £129,950

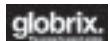
A one bedroom bungalow for the over 55's. No ongoing chain, double glazing, electric storage heating and has a low maintenance corner plot garden.

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- double glazing
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Weavering

- Three bedroom detached house
- conservatory, ensuite shower room
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- Very attractive two bedroom bungalow
- good sized rear garden, conservatory
- double glazing, excellent condition

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- ensuite, kitchen/diner, lounge
- converted garage used as a games room

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- detached bungalow in village location
- easy reach of local amenities

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Harrietsham

- Three bedroom link detached house
- Two receptions. En-suite Shower Rm
- Utility Room

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Weavering

- three bedroom semi detached
- Refitted kitchen, bathroom & en-suite
- Gas fired central heating. D. glazing

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- Extended two bedroom bungalow
- No chain. Garage
- Off street parking

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Maidstone

- spacious older terrace home
- 2 receptions. Kitchen. 2 bedrooms
- Bathroom. D. glazed, central heating

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Maidstone

- four bedroom end of terrace
- modern kitchen, bathroom
- newly fitted carpet

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Offers in excess of £335,000

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Maidstone



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Penenden Heath



Offers in excess of £350,000

Unique and imposing period house. Four beds and three reception rooms. Double garage and gated driveway.

Maidstone



£364,995

Four bed detached family home. Three receptions. Cloakroom. Family kitchen. Family bathroom. En-suite shower rm.

Larkfield



£375,000

Four bedroom detached family home with double garage, lake views and three receptions. Viewing essential.

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£380,000

Rarely available three bed detached family with double storey extension. Two receptions, kitchen with utility.

Boughton Monchelsea

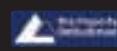


£450,000

Unique four bedroom bungalow in semi rural village location. Double garage. Viewing essential.

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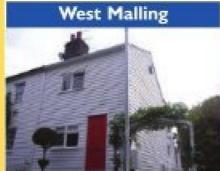


- Three Bedroom Semi Detached
- Through Lounge/Dining Room
- Garage And Driveway To Side

Enquire Larkfield

£198,500

West Malling



- 2 Bedroom Period Home
- Residents Parking Available
- Town Centre Location

Enquire West Malling

£229,995

Lenham

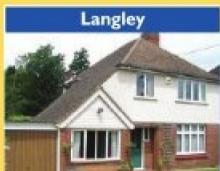


- Spacious No Chain Family Home
- Three Bedrooms Plus Garage
- Highly Recommended

Enquire Lenham

£189,995

Langley



- Detached Family Home
- 3 Reception Rooms
- Attractive Gardens

Enquire Headcorn

£309,000

Bearsted



- 3 Bedroom Detached Home
- Cul-de-sac Location
- Double Glazed Conservatory

Enquire Maidstone

£249,995

Ditton

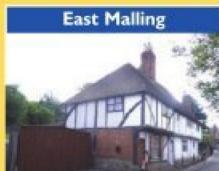


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- Ground Floor & Own Garden
- Off Road Parking

Enquire Larkfield

£132,500

East Malling



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- Inglehook Open Fireplaces

Enquire West Malling

£275,000

East Malling



- 3 Bedroom Semi Detached
- Low Maintenance Rear Gardens
- No Onward Chain

Enquire Larkfield

£174,995

West Malling



- 2 Bedroom Semi Detached
- Refurbished/Upgraded Within
- Close Proximity To Town Centre

Enquire West Malling

O.I.E.O £215,000

North Maidstone



- 2 Bedroom Terrace Home
- Separate 1st Floor Bathroom
- Useable Cellar

Enquire Maidstone

£155,000 - £165,000

Harrietsham Village

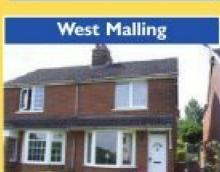


- Spacious Family Size Home
- Three Bedrooms Plus Garage
- No Chain Sale

Enquire Lenham

£199,995

Harrietsham



- Large Detached Bungalow
- Edge Of Popular Village
- Driveway & Garage

Enquire Lenham

£239,995 - £259,995

Aylesford



- 4 Bedroom Detached Home
- 24' Kitchen/Breakfast Room
- Double Garage And Parking

Enquire Larkfield

£329,995

Wrotham Heath



- 5 Bedroom Detached Property
- Potential For 2 Bedroom Annex
- Plot Approx 1/4 Acre

Enquire West Malling

O.I.E.O £500,000

Headcorn



- 2 Bedroom Park Home
- En-Suite To Master Bedroom
- Bus Service To Village

Enquire Headcorn

£159,950

North Maidstone

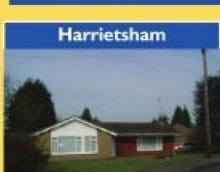


- Modern 2 Bedroom Terrace
- Town Centre Location
- Allocated Parking

Enquire Maidstone

£155,000 - £165,000

Maidstone



- 1 Bedroom Apartment
- Allocated Parking Space
- Vacant Possession

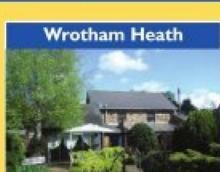
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£100,000 - £110,000

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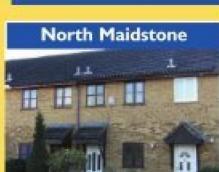


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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Bedroom Semi Detached Chalet Bungalow Double Garage to the Rear Lounge/dining room Ensuite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beautiful detached property 3 bedrooms/ Master with ensuite Garage & driveway No Chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Double Bedroom Semi Garage & Driveway Corner Plot Rear Patio and Garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immaculate apartment in semi rural location Modern fitted kitchens Private garden with access to side Allocated parking space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One bedroom maisonette Off road parking Ideal for 1st time buyers Communal garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attractive Two Bedroom Apartment Ensuite to Master Bedroom Allocated Parking Fitted Kitchen 	

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Snodland £450	Maidstone £475	Ringlestone £525	East Farleigh £625	Marden £650	Kingsley Road £650
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One bedroom flat on first floor and one on ground floor Living room, Kitchen Bathroom with shower over bath 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One bedroom ground floor flat Kitchenette with cooker & fridge Large living/dining room Double bedroom & large bathroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One bedroom house Gardens to front & rear with shed Cooker in kitchen Large bedroom with wardrobe unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 bedroom property Modern fitted kitchen Modern bathroom with electric shower Rear enclosed garden NO PETS SORRY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 bedroom house in Marden Modern kitchen with appliances Rear garden with summer house Off road parking, near to Station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 bedroom house FURNISHED Kitchen, cellar, rear garden Living room, dining room & bathroom Available Feb 2010
Charlton Street £725	Bluett Street £695	The Point £795	Upper Fant Road £795	Spot Lane £825	Barming £1150
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MOTORS NEWS



Cult of 500 helps sales reach a five-year high

FIAT has shown the strength of its recovery in the UK by posting its best sales in five years, despite the recession.

The Italian brand, buoyed by more than 24,000 sales of its Fiat 500 retro cult car, registered 60,337 cars here last year, compared with 55,325 in 2008.

It also reported healthy sales for its Alfa Romeo and newly re-launched Abarth sporting brands and impressive rises in secondhand valuations: those for the Grande Punto supermini and Panda city car both rose around a quarter.



Mazda targets private sector to keep growth

KENT-based Mazda UK finished 2009 as the only major car marque to record eight consecutive years of market growth – its 2.4 per cent share topped its 2008 record.

The 48,000 sales were also ahead of those forecast, helped by 17,000 sales of the Mazda2 supermini – the most successful Mazda line ever in this country.

Mazda UK MD Jeremy Thomson said such a record in tough times was a tribute to its dealers and a strategy of concentrating on private sales.



Aveo joins Chevy style brigade with new look

CHEVROLET, having just opened order books for the aptly named Spark city car, has shown how it will apply similarly sharp styling to the next generation Aveo supermini.

This is the sporty teaser unveiled at the Detroit motor show; it is longer, wider and more spacious than the current production Aveo – due for the chop in 2011. Chevrolet Europe chief Wayne Brannon said: "The new Aveo will be completely in tune with the striking new Cruze and Spark."



TOP MARQUE: Volkswagen's new Polo recently scooped the European Car of the Year for 2010, beating off stiff competition from Toyota's innovative IQ and the Vauxhall Astra

Polo has perfect timing to match current mood

VOLKSWAGEN'S smart new Polo brought the European Car of the Year to the German marque for first time since the Golf Mk III's 1992 COTY win.

It also pipped strong challenges from the innovative Toyota IQ city car and powerful new Vauxhall Astra.

This fifth generation car – I'm discounting some dodgy facelifts sometimes touted as 'new' models – is classier, lighter and roomier to match the modern supermini trend; you can happily downsize and economise with this after giving up something larger.

Styling echoes the latest Golf and VW's reborn Scirocco and yet it rightly lacks the visual verve of the latest Ford Fiesta.

For it may be a small car – though looking about the same size as the original Golf – but the Polo has always been something of a premium buy and ought to be more reserved.

A seemingly rock solid interior is well-arranged and uses high quality soft touch plastics and well designed seats. Easy fold-flat rear seats allow for extra large cargoes and

ROAD TEST

VW POLO

BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

there is ample stowage around the car.

Any lingering qualms about chopping an older and bigger motor for this three or five-door baby are then finally banished by a tidy drive, plus a ride quality and refinement that really would not disgrace a car two sizes bigger.

Some of this is undone by the buzzy little 70PS (69bhp) three-cylinder petrol unit in our Polo 1.2-litre SE five-door test car (£11,995), but I don't dislike this engine; steady cruising is no problem and the crisp gearshift and sure-footed handling make it entertaining on quieter roads. And despite VW championing of the diesel cause generally, 83 per cent of new Polo sales are expected to be petrol.

Even with a five-speed gearbox, the test car can average around 50mpg and is a relatively low emitter (128g/km CO₂), though still incurring annual road tax of £120 against the £35 of its current 1.6-litre diesel equivalents and tax exemption for the forthcoming BlueMotion eco model.

The diesel can also average around 65mpg, but the petrol versus diesel choice is much harder than before, especially when you can get into a petrol Polo for as little as £9,435 – diesel entry price is an astonishing £12,605.

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USED CAR ROUND-UP: OUR PICK FROM A KEY SECTOR

4x4 ON THE CHEAP

SOARING fuel and tax costs, plus the economic downturn, have clobbered second-hand values for big thirsty 4x4s, but the redefined market has firmed up prices on smaller 'rough and tough' drives. Fact is some people who bought 4x4s originally, have become used to the extra grip and higher driving position even if they don't tend to seek out serious off-roading. So, forced to sell their bigger 4x4s, many may be looking to downsize to budget all-wheel-drive alternatives although these are not without their drawbacks – including less space.

FIAT PANDA 4x4



MAYBE not quite the typical 'butch' 4x4, but the Panda makes a surprisingly tough little customer for urban and rural users, thanks to under body protection and greater ride height. Despite Fiat's past reputation for poor reliability, the Panda has also proved itself as dependable as it is practical thanks to the boxy yet stylish five-door city car body. In sharp contradiction to the 'gas guzzling' image of 4x4s, the Fiat's 1.2-litre petrol engine should average more than 40mpg too.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

SUZUKI JIMNY



PRETTY it ain't, but the Jimny has long been pretty much the cheapest 'proper' off-roader on the UK market. If you really do need cut-price 4x4 clout in challenging conditions then this is the car. However, that ability brings penalties; the Jimny is rather bouncy, primitive and crude on-road so it is not a 4x4 to buy for image-conscious town dwellers, but the car is frugal, cheap to run and prices are sensible for a reliable and durable little 4x4.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

DAIHATSU TERIOS



THIS is really a tale of two cars. The original Terios was reasonably capable off-road, but on-road refinement was poor even if the car's reliability has proved to be bulletproof and it makes a good used buy. The new version, launched in 2006, has far better ability in both departments, but is probably still too young to be found in numbers on the used market. Power is exclusively petrol in both cases, but they are reasonably economical and low emission.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

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Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure.

**For an application pack,
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(stating the role for which you are applying):

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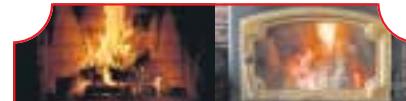
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LUCK: Rob Key hopes to keep injuries at bay for Kent to compete



PARTICIPATION: Girls football is on the rise

Football remains popular across Kent

PARTICIPATION in football has increased across the board this season according to encouraging statistics released by the Kent County Football Association (KCFA).

Figures show there are more youth players, disabled players and referees involved in the game on a regular basis than last season. It means the sport remains the most popular in the county, with 46,000 people competing every week – an increase of more than five per cent.

Paul Dolan, KCFA development manager, outlined the body's role in promoting the grass roots game which they argue makes an important vital contribution towards building stronger communities, improving health, reducing crime and tackling obesity.

He said: "The KCFA service the needs of the football community by putting in place a new generation of modern footballing facilities, increasing and widening participation levels, raising standards within affiliated clubs and investing in the football workforce by providing quality education courses to administrators, coaches and referees."

The biggest rise was among young players. There are 175 more mini-soccer and youth football teams in Kent this season. It equates to 2,500 more players compared to last year, which is ahead of the KCFA's target to get more children involved. The increase includes 23 more youth female teams and 16 new disabled sides.

As well as the desire to attract more players to the sport, the Football Association has prioritised referees through its Respect programme. This year there are an extra 21 male and 5 female referees qualified to officiate at Kent matches. It takes the overall figure of registered referees in the county above 1,100.

The next priorities are to increase the number of mini-soccer and youth teams playing in FA Charter Standard Clubs and to gain two new FA Charter Standard Leagues.

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glenn.pearson@kosmedia.co.uk

Bowlers unit staying fit will be key for us, says Rob

KEEPING players fit for the whole summer is going to be integral if Kent are going to compete in the top tier of English cricket, according to skipper Rob Key.

Kent return to Division One of the County Championship this season with a settled, but small playing squad, which means injuries to key players could have a major impact.

The club were without arguably their best fast bowler in Robbie Joseph for the majority of last season, which put extra strain on the bowling attack. He has had successful shoulder surgery and is expected to be fit for the start of the season, while the addition of Australian Stuart Clark will help bolster the attack, together with another new seamer expected to sign shortly.

CRICKET

Keeping his bowling attack fit and firing is essential to Key, who expects his side to be challenging for honours this summer.

"On paper our top 11 is as good as any around, but obviously Durham are the stand-out side with people like Steve Harmison in their side," he said. "If we have Simon Cook, Amjad Khan, Joseph and Clark, that's a very good attack. You need a bit of luck to keep them fit and the problem is if they aren't fit, we have a couple of young guys coming in that have potential, but they are where they are because they still have a lot to learn, so ideally you want to go in

with your full strength attack. This year we can't be naive, history's told us that we can't always do that."

The club captain has already forged a good working relationship with new head coach Paul Farbrace and the pair are looking for the younger players to step up and cement their place in the side.

Key said: "It's going to take a lot of luck as it always does but the good thing is we have a couple of young guys coming through. Sam Northeast – there is going to be a lot of opportunities for him, Alex Blake as well, so we are starting to see that we are strengthening not only by signing players, but the young players coming through.

"The bowling side of the things is the only place where we need to add to the side really."

Kent express interest in offering Clark a return deal



CRICKET

■ BY GLENN PEARSON

TALKS are already underway with seam bowler Stuart Clark about coming back next year after the Australian signed as Kent's overseas player for the first half of the summer.

The county offered the 34-year-old a short-term contract before Christmas, which was exclusively revealed on our website, which he got around to signing last week after getting the go-ahead from Cricket Australia.

The Australian right-arm seam bowler, who has 94 wickets from 24 Test matches for his country, has shrugged off a back injury that has kept him out of action for New South Wales of late and will be available to play for Kent as they prepare for a return to Division One of the County Championship.

The club's head coach, Paul Farbrace, also revealed to this newspaper that discussions have already begun with Clark about a return to St Lawrence, should he impress this summer.

Quality

"Stuart is hoping to play in the Indian Premier League in 2011 and we have had preliminary talks with him, that if things go well this summer, then there maybe some possibility of him coming back at some stage next year," he said. "He is a high quality player and a high quality bloke, and also the fact he is available from ball one of the summer because he is not playing in the IPL is a great thing for us."

While Clark, who was scheduled to join the county as their overseas player last summer before being called up to play for Australia, has put pen to paper on a deal, a spinner of international quality is the next player the club hope to tie down for the second half of the summer.

While Farbrace wouldn't be drawn on the identity of the club's overseas target, he did say that he is "something different to what we have got" and that the player is involved in a current international series.

The club are also keen to bolster their bowling ranks with two domestic seamers on Kent's radar, although Farbrace did say they would only sign one of them.

"We have an overseas player in place for the second half, what we are still waiting on is a seamer option," he said. "We are still looking at bringing in one more seamer if we possibly can and we are still talking to the same two people we were before Christmas."

With regulations stating that counties can name two overseas players in this summer's revamped Friends Provident Twenty20, Kent are contemplating the idea of extending Clark's deal to include the competition. That would mean he teams up with the 'mystery' new spinner for the second half of the season, although that is still yet to be decided.

• *James Tredwell has been included in a strong England Lions squad for next month's tour of the United Arab Emirates. The spinner, who is on duty with England in South Africa, will be involved in the first half of the trip. After four Twenty20 games against the UAE and Pakistan A, he will transfer to the England squad for the tour of Bangladesh.*

ACTION: Paul Farbrace revealed talks have begun with Stuart Clark (above) about a return to St Lawrence



HOCKEY



Pictures ADY KERRY

Snow wreaks havoc on town's sports fixtures

THIS was the scene around the town over the weekend as heavy snowfall across Maidstone ensured all outdoor sport was cancelled. This picture shows The Mote, where Maidstone Rugby Club were due to play a first-team fixture against Sidcup.

Weather-hit FA Trophy tie could force Stones away

FOOTBALL

■ BY TOM HOWARD

MAIDSTONE United are considering surrendering home advantage for their crucial FA Trophy game against Histon.

The first-round tie, which was originally scheduled for December 12, was called off for the sixth time on Tuesday night due to snow and freezing temperatures making the Homelands pitch unplayable.

Stones chairman Paul Bowden-Brown has

been considering changing the venue for the game, but said that would come at an extra cost to his club.

He said: "We could play it at a neutral ground and another option is losing our home advantage and playing the game at Histon's ground. These are all possible and would be considered if needed.

"It is difficult at this moment in time, but we have got to stay positive. However, the longer this goes on, the more problems we will face as we are not receiving any money from gate receipts. By sharing with Ashford we could get to a point where both clubs need to play twice a week and the pitch would not be able to cope.

"Obviously we want to get the tie played as soon as possible. We could find ourselves with

a lot of games to catch up on in the league. At the moment we are proving that ground sharing at this level with the weather we've had is not working."

One way of ensuring more games escape whatever the elements throw would be to use more 3G or artificial pitches. The Stones have planned to use one as part of their new stadium project at James Whatman Way and Bowden-Brown is adamant artificial pitches are the way forward.

He said: "We plan to build one at our new ground as we think they could be beneficial in non-league football. When we experience bad weather, games could take place on that surface and we wouldn't suffer from fixture pile ups."

FOOTBALL LEAGUE TABLES

(Not including midweek games)

RYMAN PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pt
1 Dartford	20	16	3	1	+41	51
2 Hastings United	24	12	4	8	+8	40
3 Kingstonian	22	11	3	8	+2	36
4 Wealdstone	17	9	6	2	+5	33
5 Tooting & Mitcham	20	9	4	7	+4	31
6 Sutton United	20	9	3	8	+1	30
7 Maidstone United	21	8	5	8	-1	29
8 Horsham	19	8	4	7	+6	28
9 Canvey Island	20	8	4	8	-1	28
10 Ashford Town (Middx)	21	7	7	7	-3	28
11 Boreham Wood	19	8	3	8	+4	27
12 AFC Hornchurch	20	7	6	7	-1	27
13 Harrow Borough	21	7	5	9	-3	26
14 Tonbridge Angels	21	7	5	9	-5	26
15 Aveley	19	7	4	8	+2	25
16 Hendon	18	7	3	8	-1	24
17 Carshalton Athletic	19	6	5	8	-7	23
18 Margate	19	6	4	9	-11	22
19 Cray Wanderers	23	6	4	13	-17	22
20 Bognor Regis Town	21	4	7	10	-11	19
21 Billericay Town	16	4	6	6	-5	18
22 Waltham Abbey	20	4	5	11	-17	17

FIXTURES

(Saturday):

Ryman Premier Division: Tonbridge Angels v Maidstone United

Postponement may help give runners a better shot at title

ATHLETICS

HEAVY snow showers and freezing weather conditions forced organisers to postpone last weekend's Kent Cross Country Championships.

Hundreds of cross-country runners from across Kent were due to head to Detling near Maidstone on Saturday to battle it out to become county champion. However, heavy snowfall prompted organisers to call off the event and reschedule the competition for February 13.

Medway & Maidstone runners Mike Coleman and Natalie Gray were hoping to defend their titles, but they will have to wait until the rescheduled championships take place. Coleman was bidding for his seventh consecutive title at the Kent County Showground course, which would bring him within one of Barry Royden's record of eight.

Reigning men's and women's team champions, Medway & Maidstone, believe the postponement could work in their favour, after a number of their team were doubts for the event due to injury.

Men's team manager Adrian Lowther said: "In a way the postponement has helped us, although we would have loved to race last weekend. We have a number of injuries to our team so we should be in better shape to defend our titles."

With the County Championships due to take place on February 13, the final Kent



Picture IGOR KUPCOV

BETTER SHAPE: Medway & Maidstone believe they will have a stronger squad for the rescheduled Kent Cross Country Championships

Cross Country League meeting has been rearranged for February 20 at Parkwood School, near Swanley.

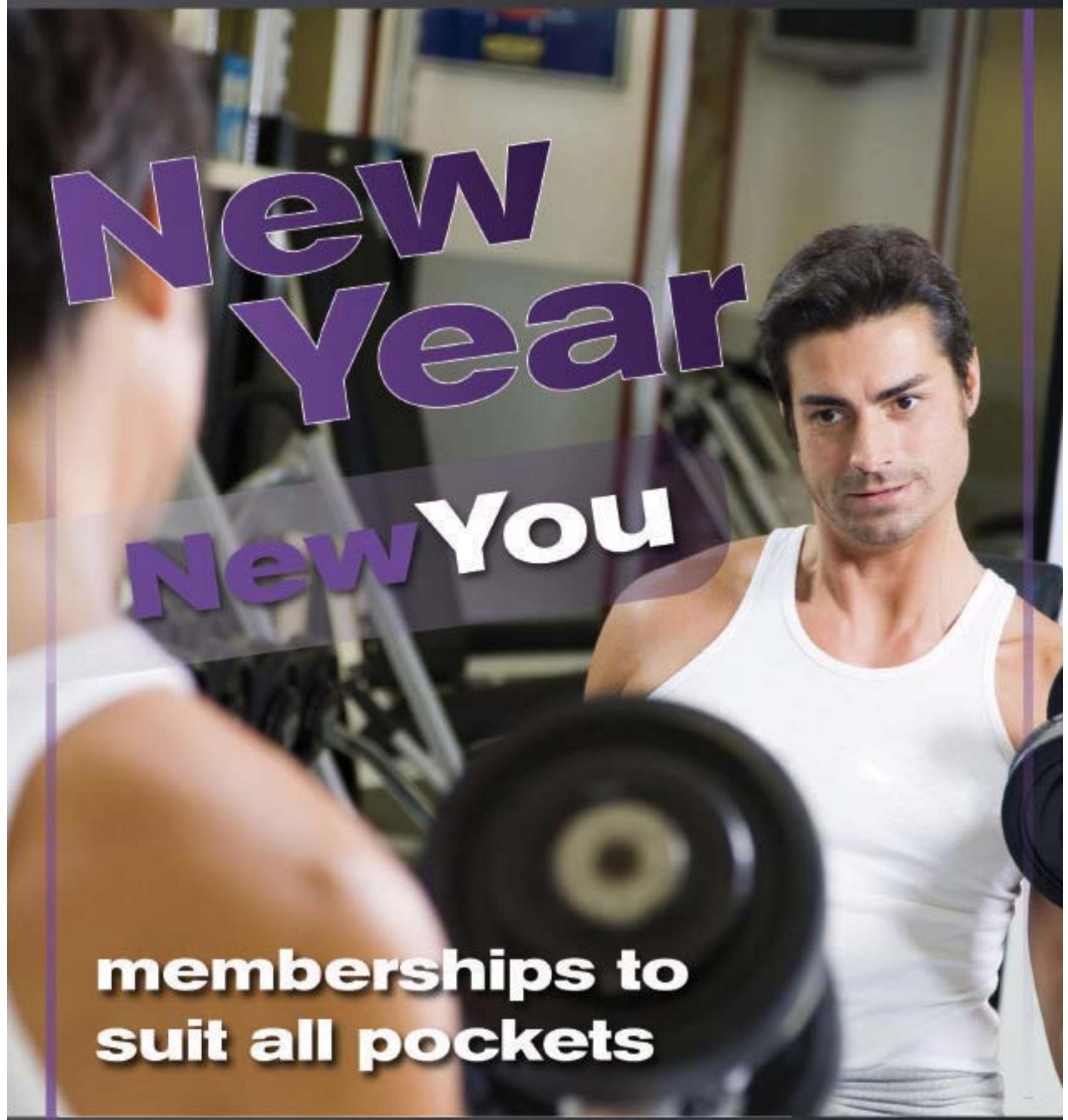
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See a slide show of how the deep freeze has affected sports grounds



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